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The Book of Love

By

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Professor of Anthropology and General Pathology, Founder of the first Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in Italy, Senator of the Kingdom of Italy

A translation of

The Physiology of Love

from the Italian text

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PAOLO MANTEGAZZA, Italian physiologist and anthropologist, was born at Monza in 1831. He travelled extensively in Europe, India and America. He was appointed surgeon at Milan Hospital and Professor of General Pathology at Pavia. In 1870 he was nominated Professor of Anthropology at the Istituto di Studii Superiori, Florence. He founded the first Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in Italy, and the Italian Anthropological Society. He was deputy for Monza in the Italian Parliament from 1865 to 1876, subsequently being elected to the Senate. He is the author of many well known works, as "The Physiology of Sorrow," "The Physiology of Pleasure," "Elements of Hygiene," "Pictures of Human Nature," "Human Ecstasies," "Head," etc. His books are most popular in Europe, where they have been translated into almost every language and have reached an enormous circulation. Paolo Mantegazza ranks with the greatest European medical authorities and the most brilliant Italian writers.

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FOREWORD

Mantegazza is to Physiology what Flammarion is to Astronomy. The two great masters head a brilliant galaxy of modern writers on natural phenomena who draw their material from science and mould it in an esthetic form. After the most skilful analysis of the scientific elements to their minutest components, they proceed to an ideal synthesis in which the various elements retain their substance, yet change their outward appearance. It seems as if these elect minds, having once satisfied their scientific curiosity as to physical and human phenomena, had been fascinated and inspired by an irresistible love of creation, and rising above the facts and laws of nature to the evanescent and melodious world of imagination, they offer us their work in a harmonious unity of two seemingly opposite and irreconcilable elements —the real and the ideal, Science and Poetry.

And thus, I dare say, it is as if, by a generous law of reaction and equilibrium, while our generation seems to gravitate toward a life of facts and order, barren of idealism, Science would teach us that she herself does not benumb or kill sentiment, but, on the contrary, discloses to the minds of the elect the flowery slopes of an unknown and infinite world of wonders and sentiment.

So it must be that those who have attained a high place in intellectual life will gladly replace the old conception of physical and human phenomena with a new and more intense representation, which, measured in the finitude of our reason, is loved in the infinity of our sentiment. To the uninitiated mind most beautiful is the representation of the sun in the image of Phœbus crossing the heavens in his flaming chariot drawn by fiery horses; but still more beautiful for the intellectual mind is it to think of the immense body of fire, of the

energy darting from a star more than a hundred million miles distant from our planet, more than a hundred million times larger than the earth, and yet a star millions of times smaller than millions of other celestial bodies to our naked eye unknown, unknown to our most powerful telescopes, and whose existence and fantastic speed in the space of the heavens are divined only by the abstraction of our faculties in an infinite representation of the laws of physics. Poetical is the vision of a goddess of Olympus descending to earth and carrying to a man asleep the message or the image of a dear, distant person; but immensely more poetical is the conception of a telepathic force within us, made of us, consciously or unconsciously created by us, an integral part of our psychical organism, and by which we instantly communicate over hills and dales, mountains and valleys, oceans and deserts, with another human being whose spirit is harmoniously attuned to ours.

The impersonation of hatred and love by Fury and Cupid is much less poetical than the conception of an explosion of psychical forces, powerful and antagonistic, in millions of men at the same time.

The task of dealing with the natural history, the origin and the development of the sentiment which underlies the principal phenomena of human existence, which came into being with the first twilight of organic life, and which indissolubly binds together the individuals and the generations, seems to have been reserved to the genius of Paolo Mantegazza, and with this great subject he dealt in a masterly way, in a way unimitated and inimitable. He has snatched Love from the Olympus of the gods of old, from the clutches of classic literature, stripped him of all his tinsel and garments, and revealed him as part—flesh and blood of man.

By a new conception of love, more rational, more human and yet no less poetical than the classic representations to which we have been accustomed from times immemorial, Mantegazza gives us a work in which the scientific foundation and the poetical conceptions are united in such wealth

of colors and harmonies that its reading, rich with true and romantic charm, is incomparably superior to our best fiction. It is a daring deed, both in the literary and the philosophical field, and it opens a new horizon to the idealization of human feelings, discoveries and events.

Mantegazza, unlike countless love writers and poets, approaches his field not with a hoe or a plow to scratch the surface of the ground, but with a powerful drill that penetrates into the lowest strata of the earth and reveals its deepest terrestrial composition. In the pursuit of his aim, carried by enthusiasm in the innermost research of facts and by admiration for the beauty of his subject, Mantegazza has used all the wealth of his literary training, skilfully and lavishly drawing upon all the resources of the Italian language. The task of the translator has thus been made doubly difficult, as the original language of the book has more subtlety and artistic abandon than the English language would allow. Rather than run the risk of betraying either the substance or the representation of the author's idea, often it has been preferred to sacrifice the turn of the English phrase to that of the corresponding Italian, and possibly incur the imputation of exoticism.

Such is the translation of a beautiful Book of Love offered to the American public at a time when all the evil passions and degradations of hatred are unleashed over the world. In striking contrast with the trend of the human mind today, what a meager chance is awaiting the contemplation of a sentiment whose mission is to tie all humanity with a bond of affection! And yet, while time and evolution relegate the memory of the most fearful cataclysms of the human race to the icy page of history, the fundamental elements constituting human life cannot be changed or destroyed. Love will continue to exist as long as the laws of affinity and procreation seize the human being at his birth and by the evolution of matter dominate him even after his death. The struggle for life may become intensified or disappear from the world; hatred among classes, nations, races may deepen, expand or be altogether eliminated; passions may gain fur-

ther ascendancy over humanity, or humanity may learn to control them; and, in the words of Shelley,

> "Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change, to these
> All things are subject but eternal Love."

At the feet of him, procreator and prince of all affections, at once proud, generous, kind, fair, and weak, avaricious, cruel, deceitful, in all virtues rich and in all sins, a king and a miser, we shall always lay, proudly or in shame, the innermost throbs of our heart, our tears and our joys, the highest aspirations of our mind, the sweetest ecstasies of our soul, our convulsions, our despairs, our crimes, up to the very threshold of the great oblivion, when, in the words of the poet, of the extenuated race one lone man and one woman, among the ruins of the mountains and of the dead woods, in the wake of the departing warmth, clasped together in the supreme fate of creation, livid, with glassy eyes shall see the last sun descend forever.

Er. Be.

TO THE READER

I HAVE conceived love to be the most powerful and at the same time the least studied of human affections. Surrounded by a triple forest of prejudice, mystery and hypocrisy, civilized men know it too often only through stealth and shame. Poets, artists, philosophers, legislators, snatch a morsel now and then from the flesh of the great god, and hurry away to conceal it as a precious booty of forbidden fruit. To study love as a phenomenon of life, as a gigantic power which moulds itself in a thousand ways among various races and in various epochs, and as an element of health for the individual and for the generations, has appealed to me as a great and worthy undertaking.

THE AUTHOR.

THE BOOK OF LOVE

" . . . *this precious jewel*
Upon the which is every virtue founded."

—DANTE.

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL PHYSIOLOGY OF LOVE

MANY years ago I wrote that to live means *nutrition and generation,* and the deeper I cast the sounding-line into the dark abysses of life, the more I am convinced that this definition faithfully depicts the most striking characteristics of all creatures which, from bacteria to man, come to life, grow and die on the face of our planet. If, however, I wished still further to simplify my idea, reducing life to its simplest and most essential form, I would say without fear of betraying the truth, that *to live means to generate.*

Every living body is perishable, but before dying it has the power of reproducing the form that has made it capable of living; and that whirlwind which absorbs and rejects, which assimilates new atoms and repels old ones, and which so clearly represents the eternal picture of life in all its manifestations, is also the most faithful representation of every form of generation.

Nutrition is a real genesis, and in the great chemical laboratory of living beings we have at all times before our eyes the reproduction of histological elements of organs and individuals. We lose hair, epithelia, white corpuscles every day; and yet every day we generate hair, epithelia and leucocytes: this is an every-day generation in the body of man. A nail falls off, a new one takes its place: this is the reproduction of an organ. We generate children similar to ourselves: this is the reproduction of an entire organism, the true *generation.* But in one of our offspring we see re-repeated a mole which is on our nose: this is the reproduction of an organ within an organism. On the other hand, one

race generates another race, one species another species; and here we see a broader genesis by which from the reproduction of a cell through another cell we gradually pass to the generating of an organ, of an individual, of a race, of a species.

The world of living beings is a gigantic tree and from its trunk shoot forth the branches of classes, orders, species. On the branches leaves grow, which are the individuals; but each one of these small individuals generates within itself many cells, true organisms within greater ones. The world of living beings is but a great laboratory of prolific, incessant generation. Cells generate cells; organs, organs; species, species. An intimate brotherhood makes us members of one great organism—the placenta of living beings; and among ourselves we exchange the same matter which each of us in turn contributes to the work of apparent destruction, called *nutrition,* and to that of reproduction, designated as *generation.* To feed themselves and to generate, living beings are continually exchanging with each other a part of their own matter which, passing from one organism to another, seems to acquire new energy and new life. On the one hand, seaweeds live on mushrooms, carnivorous animals devour herbivorous, herbivorous feed on herbs, and man, the highest branch of the tree of living beings, partakes of all. On the other hand, males and females in continuous succession interchange part of their matter, remoulding their primitive forms.

The most elementary form of life is not, however, the cell, since at a lower stage we find the *protoplasm,* the true *primum vivens* which, by scission, generates the individual; and, by nourishing itself, nobody can tell what mysterious genesis of atoms it induces within its own most simple organism. The protoplasm cannot live without a continual exchange of matter, so that the live molecules of yesterday are dead today; and those which are alive today will be dead tomorrow; therefore nutrition also, in the last analysis, is an intimate and very mysterious generation.

Evanescence of forms is one of the most essential characteristics of living beings, and we give the name of death to

the falling of every leaf from the tree of life. Man, also, drops some of these leaves every day—hair, epithelia, cells, which often produce a secretive substance and fall with it. Before dying, a part of the preëxisting form remains to reanimate the dead form and follows in its turn the parabolical cycle through which the mother form has passed. This is the most general principle and includes all possible kinds of generation, from that of scission to the highest form of sexual genesis. One would say that the life of an individual is only a moment of the great life of the species, of the classes, of the kingdoms of living beings; it is a spark which shoots off intermittently, passing from one organism to another.

Powerful and irresistible is the tendency to generate; in a great many cases the individual sacrifices himself consciously, or is unwittingly sacrificed by the laws of nature, provided that before death he transmit life to others. "Let the individual perish, if this preserve the species!" Such is the eternal cry of nature, which men and infusoria, oaks and mushrooms alike must obey. If the individual is protected and possesses preservative instincts and defensive organs, the species has a hundred bulwarks, a thousand manners of safeguard, more means of protection than are needed. In fact, living beings generate so profusely that one species alone would pervade the earth if the various circles of expansion, falling in with each other, did not struggle among themselves, like the circles caused on the smooth surface of a lake by a handful of sand thrown upon it by a child. Apart from the manner in which life is transmitted, there is an amount of life which passes away, there is *a certain amount* of fecundity, and this may seem, at first glance, most whimsical, while it is governed by the laws of preservation.

To be born and to die—fecundity and mortality—are so closely connected with each other that we can consider them as different aspects of the same phenomenon, as the action and reaction of life. When reproduction increases beyond measure, the dangers for the individuals generated increase at the same time, and destruction mows down the excessive

number of those which are born. Now it is food that is no longer proportionate to the new-born; then parasites and enemies of the over-expanded species, which, increasing in turn, reëstablish the equilibrium. The destructive forces and the protective balance mutually, as happens with many other forces, simpler and better known.

The Malthusian problem, however, is much more intricate. If all species were equally prolific and had a life of equal length, the problem would, in fact, be reduced to a question of space and food; but, on the contrary, the duration of life and the various degrees of fecundity serve in turn to reëstablish the equilibrium by other ways. If the reproduction of mice were as slow as that of man, they would all be destroyed before another generation could be born; and even if they could live fifteen or sixteen years, not one of them, perhaps, would ever attain that age, surviving all dangers. And on the other hand, should oxen multiply in the same proportion as infusoria, the entire species would die of hunger in a week.

In order that an organic form be preserved, the individual must preserve itself and generate other individuals. Now these forces must vary inversely. If the individual, through its simple organization, is little fit to resist danger, it must countervail this weakness with reaction, generating intensely. If, on the contrary, high qualities give it a great capacity for self-protection, it should then diminish its fecundity proportionately. If danger is reckoned as a constant quantity, inasmuch as capacity for resistance should be equal in all species, and does consist of two factors (faculty to maintain individual life and power to multiply it), these factors cannot but vary in opposite directions. This most simple and sublime law, which Herbert Spencer read in the great book of nature, is one of those that rule with the most inflexible tyranny the elementary phenomena of reproduction, as well as the highest and most complex phenomena of human love.

In the *Diatomaceæ* the fecundity by scission is gigantic: Smith reckoned that a single gnat could create a thousand million individuals in one month. A young *Gonium,* capable of scission after twenty-four hours, can produce in a week 268,435,456 individuals equal to itself. In other cases, the process of multiplication is not scissiparous, but endogenous, as with the *Volvox;* but the reproduction is always extraordinary. If all the individuals generated should survive, a *Paramecium* would, by scission, produce in the course of a month 268,000,000 individuals. Another microscopic animal can produce 170,000,000,000 individuals in four days. The *Gordius*—the entozoön of an insect—lays 8,000,000 eggs in less than a day. An African termite lays 80,000 eggs in twenty-four hours, and Eschricht reckoned at 64,000,000 the number of eggs in the adult female of an *Ascaris lumbricoides.*

If, from the minute microscopic creatures exposed to every danger and which consume very little matter—if, from these living atoms of which you could gather as many in your hands as there are men on earth, you pass to the elephant, you have there a giant of flesh that requires thirty years of its life to become fecund, and then, after a long gestation, produces but one offspring. And above the elephant you find a giant of thought, Man, who requires the third part of his average life to reproduce himself, and after nine long months generates one child only; and, what is worse, he sees half of his offspring mowed down before they are able to bear flower and seed.

The methods of transmitting life are manifold, since nature in no other function has been so inexhaustibly rich with forms as in generation; but we, dealing here with the general physiology of love, will reduce all the various generative forms to these few:

Separation or Scission.—The individual dissevers into two parts, and each of these, made independent, reproduces the generator. This is the most simple form of genesis, in which

the function of reproduction is not distinct from the other functions, but merges into them.

Endogenesis.—Within an individual many other individuals are formed; the parent opens, and, destroying its own individuality, dissolves in its offspring.

The individual by itself alone generates other individuals.—The parent generates through special organs and without dissolving in its offspring. The individuals generated and separated from the generator are eggs, seeds, perfect organisms; but in every case these are always elements evolved within the generator through special organs. The generative function is already marked and distinct in a laboratory which detaches and prepares some of the elements of the individual, so that they may reproduce it.

Monœcious Sexual Generation.—A step higher, the generative laboratory becomes complicated and divides into two parts, one of which brings forth the egg, the other the fecundating element. Each, for its own account, prepares the element destined for the reproduction of the individual; but if both do not come in contact, the new being is not generated. We have the sexes quite distinct, but enclosed within a single individual. Strange to observe, however, we behold an individual that generates an egg which cannot be fecundated by that individual's seed; or an individual that produces a seed which cannot be of any service to the egg. A duplex embrace of two hermaphrodites which interlace a quadruple love, and the appearance of winds, insects, or birds, as fecundatory paranymphs, resolves these problems of a most singular generation.

Diœcious Sexual Generation.—Finally, the generating organs, too, separate and fix themselves each upon a single individual, which is sterile in itself, produces but one of the generating elements, and, therefore, must combine with the other; and by such union they may produce the new creature: the sum of two individualities, the male and the female, the father and the mother. Man loves in twain; but although, like the other superior animals akin to him, he presents a diœcious sexual generation, yet in his inmost tis-

sues he also possesses the *endogenous* genesis and the genesis by *scission,* and presents in this regard the remains also of the elementary forms of life enclosed within him.

In this rapid course through all the forms of generation we see delineated the same laws by which nature rules the other functions. Gradually new forces appear and new organs are brought forth to represent the subdivision of work. First, it is the whole individual that generates, then an organ of the individual, then again two organs in the same individual, and again two organs in separate individuals. In the many forms of genesis, the unity of the plan is more than ever manifest, and we, the highest of all living creatures, while, like the amœba, we have in our protoplasm and scattered all through the mass of our body the faculty to generate, recognize in man and woman the two distinct laboratories which prepare the seed and the human egg.

While the pathology of love, in many cases of lasciviousness, shows the last declining remains of a promiscuous hermaphroditism, imagination, a forerunner of science, causes us to divine that in more complex creatures sexes may be more than two, and generation presents a deeper subdivision of work, in the same manner as in the cynical or skeptical distinctions between platonic and sensual loves and in the most daring polygamies of soul and senses we perceive in the distance other lights which disclose to us the horizon of new and monstrous generative possibilities, some of them reaching the suprasensible and some as base and brutal as the most repelling atavic regressions.

When the science of the future will permit our posterity to connect all the phenomena of nature, from the most elementary to the most complex, from the simplest motion of a molecule to the flash of the most sublime genius, in an uninterrupted chain of facts, then perhaps the first origins of love will be sought in the elementary physics of dissimilar atoms which endeavor to find each other and combine, and with opposite motion generate the equilibrium. The positive

electric body seeks the negative, the acid seeks the base, and in these conjunctions, with great development of light, heat and electricity, new bodies are formed, new equilibriums obtained; it seems that Nature renews her forces and, rejuvenescing, prepares herself for new combinations and new loves.

And is not love perhaps the combination of two dissimilar atoms which seek each other and combine, notwithstanding all the adverse forces of heaven and earth? And in the same manner as the molecule of potassium snatches the oxygen away from water with a great development of light and heat, is not the union of those two molecules, which we call man and woman, accompanied by a hurricane of passion, by flashes of genius, by infinite glittering of flames and ardor? Do we not perceive a pandemonium of physical and psychical forces accumulating, battling and equilibrating around that point where a man and a woman are attracted toward each other, to rejuvenate the human matter and rekindle the torch of life?

A particular motion, originated in the ovary and in the testis, accumulates such energy in the nervous centers as eventually to bring the masculine element in contact with the feminine, so that the generative gemmulæ produced in the slow laboratory of two different organisms reunite in that nest which is the maternal womb and where the fecundated egg must transform into a human being.

The poet and the metaphysician may define love in whatever manner they choose. There is only one definition for science: Love is the energy which must bring in contact the egg with the seed; without ovary and without testis there can be no love.

That forward movement which is called generation is so powerful as to oppose and even destroy the minor motion, that is, the preservation of the individual; and while each individual rotates, it is carried forward with a movement a hundred times more irresistible and powerful through space and time. The first motion represents the narrow life of the

individual and is protected by egotism; the second is the great life of the species, and love defends it.

The most superficial study of the generative function is sufficient to convince us that love is always a phenomenon of high chemistry, in which the generating atoms, in order to combine, must be neither too similar nor too dissimilar. No sooner has sex manifested itself in animals than we have in the same individual, but in two distinct laboratories, the formation of two generative elements. Sex, which, at first thought, appears to us as one of the deepest mysteries of life, is nothing but a laboratory which attracts the elements generated by every element of the organism, and encloses and preserves them in itself in order to pour them into the bosom of other elements, similar but not equal, generated in another laboratory, that is, the opposite sex. When the two generative laboratories are separated in two distinct organisms, it is probable that the diversity of their gemmulæ is greater. If in individuals closely resembling each other, but of different races, we combine the generative elements, we still will probably have fecundity; while, if we pass to different species, fecundity will be more difficult; if we pass to different genera it will in most cases become impossible.

But let us set aside the words *species* and *genera,* which, in nature, have not the same value as we assign to them in our museums and in our books, and let us, instead, take from the world of the living a handful of animals, haphazard, so that we may gather together brothers, cousins, nephews, individuals of the same or affinitive classes, genera, orders, and let us place them in line, in the order of their degrees of similarity. Should we try to couple them, or study their spontaneous loves, we would find cases of sterility in beings too similar and in beings too dissimilar; therefore, generation moves between these two opposite poles, too great similarity and too great dissimilarity. That is the reason why we may see a woman with a mustache, atrophied breasts and deep voice remain sterile with a robust man: they do not generate because they have too close a resemblance. That is the rea-

son why a dog and a cat are sterile: they do not generate, because they are too dissimilar. Nature said to living beings: "If you wish to love, be neither too similar nor too dissimilar."

Let us try and discover the reason of this law. Germs that are too similar cannot concur in fecundation, or fecundate unsatisfactorily, perhaps through the same laws of elementary physics and chemistry which cause bodies to repel other bodies equally electrified or with which they have too close a resemblance in their physico-chemical characteristics. Try the combination of sulphur with phosphorus, of iodine with bromine, and, on the other hand, observe the ardent loves of chlorine and hydrogen, of potassium and oxygen. The fecundity of two different organisms is, besides, an energy bearing in one direction; it is the sum of resistances all of them equal, while two quantities, different but susceptible of being summed, give a greater number of diverse resistances and have, therefore, a greater possibility of living and resisting external enemies. An individual is the sum of many victories over exterior elements, the result of many and infinite adaptations to the ambient which surrounds it. Two individuals dissimilar, but not enough to impede generation, will bring together those adaptations and those victories through which the new creature enjoys the possibility of resistance and will meet with fewer dangers.

It is much easier to explain why forms too dissimilar cannot love each other. This impossibility is one of the most powerful means of preserving the living forms, extremely varied, in those conditions which are useful to their existence. When a living being has come out of the struggles of life, when it has yielded to external agents and enemies in a certain way, it transmits itself to future generations in that form and nature which are the fruit of a long and successful battle. Precisely for the same reason, an herbivorous animal, which is the offspring of another that has gained its flesh with herbs, cannot grow and multiply except by feeding on herbs. Imagine for a moment that organs and tissues feeding on meat should be grafted on to

the organs and tissues of an herbivorous animal. What disorders would not arise! A fragment of carnivorous animal closed up in an organism which has teeth to chew herbs, gastric juice to digest herbs, intestinal tube to assimilate herbs, and olfactory nerves which find leaves and flowers delectable! The apparent stability of the species, which in fact resolves itself in a slow mutation, is nothing therefore but the unavoidable necessity for male and female to pour into the crucible of generation elements that can combine, metals that can fuse, forming a homogeneous and compact alloy.

From the elementary physics of generation you may jump to the most ardent sympathies, to the juxtaposition of human characters in the nest of love, and you will see that the same law rules all and each of these facts. *Neither too similar nor too dissimilar.* Love is the sum of analogous but not identical forces; it is the complement of complements; it is the square of squares; it tolerates neither subtractions nor divisions.

We shall see at every step of our studies the same laws which govern generation, or the so-called *physical love,* reappear in the high spheres of love. For us, love is simply one function which, to be understood, must not be barbarously mutilated and disrupted so as to have one part of its limbs sent to the laboratory of physiology, and the other left in the library of the philosopher. Love is such energy that from the lowest grades of the most automatic instinct it ascends to the highest regions of the suprasensible, and perhaps no other psychical element reaches to more distant poles.

Think of the shepherd of the high Apennines who loves a goat, and of Heine, who in the clutches of death wants to be brought to the Louvre to see the Venus of Milo once more, and you will have a pallid idea of the frontiers which this ardent, tenacious, violent, multiform passion called love seeks to conquer.

While in the field of chemical facts generation marks the highest point of molecular chemistry, in the psychological

field love reaches the loftiest summits of the ideal. Love is the force of forces; it makes its appearance when man is strongest; it vanishes when age has weakened him. Love is the joy of joys, it is at the bottom of every desire, of all riches, on every horizon of pleasure; it is always the highest aim. If we except men who were born without gentle feelings, in every human sky love is the brightest star; it is the sun of every firmament. It is the strongest, the most human, the richest of passions.

In all forms of generation, whether agamous or sexual, by scission or by endogenesis, whether we consider the son in comparison with the father, or with far Adam, we behold the generated preserve a part of the last or of the first generator, so that the motion communicated from the first to the last generation is transmitted without interruption. Take as the starting-point the Adam of the Bible or the Adam of progressive evolution, the clay breathed into by a God or the Darwinian *ascidia:* each one of us has still within himself a material part belonging to the first man or first father of all men, so that an immense brotherhood unites all living beings. To the divination of the poet who, beholding the flowery meadows, the forests, the swarming of animals, cries out with emotion: "O Mother Nature!" science answers in accord, as it contemplates a quantity of matter and a quantity of life pass from one to the other of those organisms called individuals. For every life extinguished a new life is born, and within us, who occupy the loftiest place among all the living beings on this planet, quiver and vibrate the molecules which have passed through thousands and thousands of existences and thousands and thousands of loves.

If love is the warmest and the most human of passions, it is also the richest. To its altar every faculty of the mind carries its tributes, every throb of the heart carries its fire. Every vice and every virtue, every shame and every heroism, every martyrdom and every lewdness, every flower and every fruit, every balm and every poison may be brought to the temple of love. Everything human can be carried away in

the whirlwind of love; and more than once man regrets that he possesses but one life to offer as a holocaust to this god. And yet this gigantic force is the least governed of all the passions. It would seem that before it man feels too small and too weak; and just as the savage falls on his knees before the lightning and weeps, or flees, the civilized man, even today, is terrified before the unexplored hurricane of this sovereign force, and acknowledges his powerlessness and his ignorance. In the delirium of voluptuousness and in the storm of desperation, he lets himself be carried away by a force which he considers superior to reason, too powerful in comparison with his weakness. In his codes he writes, timidly, laws which he violates every day; opprobrious punishments which the juries always cancel; and a dense fog of ignorance surrounds the temple of love, which he enters nearly always as a thief and from which he emerges nearly always as an outcast. Our legislation on love is a wretched connubiality of hypocrisy and lechery, and as we know not how to look love in the face, we disguise it with the garments of the buffoon and the prostitute. Our laws are so perfect that many must not love, and very many cannot love; and while we all weep over the few victims of hunger, we shrug our shoulders at the hundreds of thousands who die in celibacy for not having been able to gather the straw for their nests, and we laugh at the millions of celibates who know nothing of love save masturbation and prostitution. In the presence of love we are still more or less savage—the basest brutishness before the most powerful of human forces!

Yet love also should be conquered like all other forces of nature; and without losing a fraction of its energy, or a flower of its garden, it also must be governed by science, which understands and directs all things. The lightning which prostrates the savage in the dust of fear is guided by us on the small wire of the conductor, gilds the ornaments of our women and transmits our thoughts from one hemisphere to the other. This other lightning, also, which, more powerful and more dangerous, explodes in the hurricanes of

the human heart, must be studied, guided and reduced to a live force that can be measured, weighed and governed. Love should be the dearest, the most precious, the most powerful of civilized forces. No other passion can claim supremacy where it appears; no other can solve the sublime problem of combining the greatest voluptuousness with the greatest virtue, of generating the good of future beings through the joy of the living ones, of transmitting civilization to posterity in the spasm of an embrace.

LOVE IN PLANTS AND ANIMALS

CHAPTER I

LOVE IN PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Arcadians, metaphysicians, and all adorers of the past are cursing every day and every hour the modern mania of comparing human things to living beings and call for anathemas against this absurd and sacrilegious profanation of the man-God. Comparative anatomy, physiology and psychology are for these gentlemen nothing but different forms of a strange aberration of the human mind; something capricious and morbid which, by the continual comparison of man and beast, brutalizes us, prostitutes us, and sends us back with a new insanity to the bestial Olympus of men with animal members and of human grafts set on the flesh of the son of God. According to those most exalted and supercilious gentlemen, these are psychic maladies not to be discussed, but cured by contempt and ridicule; they are the hysterics of thought, which disappear with the generation that has seen them rise from the corrupt entrails of the human family. But man does not lower himself by comparing himself with beings that are the matrix from which he came; he does not degrade himself by scenting the earth from which you, also you, O super-gentlemen, say we have been moulded and which is ever the frame supporting us.

The true metaphysics, if this word has still any meaning, was created by modern science, which, by the boldest comparisons of the simplest things with the most complex, of the smallest with the greatest, extracts the subtile from the subtile, and under the motley appearance of the form reveals the only law that governs them. We are going to seek in the limbus of living beings the crepuscules of the highest human things. Bowing our head modestly before the

simplicity of laws which govern and control such a wealth of forms, let us return to the reality of things, feeling neither dejected nor ashamed of ourselves, but satisfied with having known how to read the notes of harmony written in the world of dwarfs and giants. Our pride will find sufficient satisfaction, after so many comparisons, in realizing that we are first among all living beings.

No spectacle of nature is more splendid, more admirable than that of the loves of plants and of animals. Nature could not write more fascinating music with a less number of notes, and no other phenomenon of life can resemble that of generation in profusion of forms, lavishness of artifices, inexhaustible conception of mechanisms. One would say that where the reproductive gemmulæ are attracted, where life reconcentrates its best part to renovate itself with a new impetus, there new and strange energies are developed, and the forces of nature appear with the most gigantic pomp, the most gorgeous luxury. In every other function, Nature, like an economical housewife, seeks the useful and often is satisfied with the necessary; she simplifies the mechanisms, removes the attritions and through the simplest ways attains her aim. But she is not content with the good and the true for generation, and, surrounding the nest of love with a large profusion of esthetic elements, she exhausts every resource to prepare a feast for the life which renews itself. It is around the flower that, nearly always, the most exquisite beauty of form, the most inebriating seductions of perfume, the most varied tints of the painter's palette are interwoven. How many treasures of esthetic force in a lily and in a rose! And all that luxury to do honor to the love of a day, the love of an hour; and all the splendor of a nuptial robe, a thousand times more beautiful than human industry could produce, to screen the virginal kiss of an anther and a pistil!

And jumping from the lily and the rose to the summits of the animal world, how many splendors of fancy, how many flashes of passion, what an interlacement of elements, to make a garland for the kiss of a man and a woman. Run, fly, on a spring day, among the blossoming beds of a garden,

among the thousand amorous corollas of the flowers; shake the severe boughs of the cypress and of the pine; plunge your feet into the soft, wet carpet of vallisnerias; let your eyes penetrate into the humid recesses of the barks and the mossy labyrinths of the granite; and everywhere a warm circumfusion of pollen, spores and antheridia will tell your flaming heart that in the world of plants, among the perfumes of the corollas and the emeralds of the seaweeds, love exists in a thousand ways, and the atmosphere is all pervaded with the warm, inebriating sparks which, on the wings of the winds and of the insects and in the rays of the sun, diffuse everywhere an amorous, voluptuous wave.

The love of flowers is mute in the soft perfume of their corollas, but in many of them silence does not prevent tender blandishments and fervent embraces; many plants, always immovable, have convulsions in their flowers; always cold, they flame up in the calyx of their loves. Often they love only once a year; but what a profusion of embraces, what a fecundity of pollen and seed! Shake with your hand a single branch of the juniper or of the blossoming pine, and you will immediately see the air darken with a cloud of fruitful dust; entire forests love at one time, and for miles and miles they fill the air with voluptuous murmurs; more than once do the winds carry clouds of pollen, and the wanton rain washes and purifies the atmosphere, and tinges itself all with the amorous dust.

And without jealousy or rancors, in the shade of the blossoming pines, and among the stamens of the enamored flowers, in every clod of grass, in every cavern of mountain, in every fissure of rock, in every bed of seaweeds, in the deep waves of the ocean, and in the drops of water oozing from the glaciers, in the somberest darkness of mines and in the infinite sky, the animals interweave their loves; so that in every part of the globe, and in every hour of the day and of the night, every ray of the sun warms and contemplates millions of embraces, while every ray of the moon guides the nocturnal lovers to a thousand more intimate blandishments. If it is true that a leaf falls from the tree of life every sec-

ond and dies, then at every moment a new gemma is born, and for every gemma how many embraces, for every newborn how many loves! The flowers planted in the ground of a cemetery appeal to me as the noblest form of the cult of the dead; for, if our planet is a vast cemetery, where every atom of time buries an atom that was living once, this earth is all a nest of love, in which every zephyr carries to our ear a sigh of voluptuousness, and the harmony of the ether, a dream of the ancient poets, is nothing, perhaps, but the sum of all the kisses exchanged among the living creatures.

If the anatomist and the physiologist discover in the study of generation in the various animals some precious materials to mark the highest laws of the morphology of the living beings, the psychologist finds in the loves of brutes sketched nearly all the elements that man has gathered under his robust wings. No function is more adapted than love to contemplate the unique type and the infinite legion of its forms, to admire a unique conception developed in a thousand different tongues.

No sooner has sex made its appearance than the male quickly distinguishes himself by his aggressive character. With few exceptions, it is the male that seeks, conquers, keeps the prey. Glance over the pages of Darwin's work on sexual selection and you will see how many weapons nature has given to males to conquer and keep their mates. Even in plants, it is the pollen that goes in search of the ovulum, the ovulum that awaits the spark that is to fecundate it. In the most simple of animal forms, where the male and female live and die fettered to the spot that saw their birth, it is the virile element that is always carried there, where the germ awaits it. This is the first dogma that governs the religion of love in the entire world of the living; and when all high races look with contempt upon the woman who attacks and the man who flees, they only protest against the violation of one of the most tyrannical laws which men and mollusks, women and pistils, cannot evade.

Man summarizes all the forms of the living nature; so

that we are frequently tempted to affirm that whatever of human is in him is the greatest synthesis of all the minor forms of the living, and that he is precisely the first because under the bark of his individuality all the forces are gathered within him, from the secondary to the last; and the same phenomenon we observe in the psychical elements of his loves.

Pigeons, even when intermingled with the most varied breeds, are seldom unfaithful to their mates; and although the male, in a rare whim, may break the vow of fidelity, he quickly returns to the dear nuptial bed of his spouse. Darwin kept some pigeons of different breeds shut up in the same place for a long time, and there was never a bastard among them. Do we not also find among men splendid examples of the most faithful monogamy and do you not recognize it as the social basis in almost all the superior races?

The antelope of South Africa has up to a dozen mates, and the *Antilope saiga* of Asia more than a hundred. But have we not the small and hypocritical polygamies of modern society, and those, most splendid and impudent, of the Orientals? Have we not in man, as in very many animals, females who submit to love as to a duty, and males on whom love must be imposed? Have we not libertinism at the very side of chastity? Have we not in the world of man all the lasciviousness, all the ardors, all the possibilities of lewdness of the animals' world?

Several fulmineous forms of love which last no longer than the flash of the lightning not infrequently occur among men, as the cold, long-lasting kisses of many insects are an amorous practice of various human temperaments. And fiery, cruel jealousies and bloody battles are scenes common to men and brutes; nor is death for love an exclusive privilege of man. The few and coarse passions of animals are all carried as a holocaust to the altar of generation, while man carries to it all the ardors of his rich nature, all the infinite forces which he has drawn from the great womb of the living beings and which he has centuplicated with the accumulations of his hundred civilizations. The chaffinch,

in the contests of amorous song, more than once falls from the tree on which he is singing his erotic hymn, smothered by pulmonary apoplexy; just as many a poet beholds the lyre of his genius and the chords of his life break at the feet of a woman. In the silence of the shady thickets, the nightingale, exhausted, swoons with love and fatigue, and dies for having been unable to vanquish a more fortunate rival in melody and strength of notes; and hundreds and hundreds of times, in the somber labyrinths of life, the human lover dies in the battles of an unhappy love, and he too dies because he could not sing louder and sweeter than his rival. Nor is coquetry peculiar to the human female only; no woman in the world will ever be the equal of a female canary in the wicked art with which she resists the impatient ardors of her companion; and the thousand travesties with which in the feminine world a "yes" is concealed under a "no" are but pallid imitations of the refined coquetry, the simulated flights, the amorous bitings and the hundred thousand cajoleries of the world of animals.

As to the esthetic elements which nature has lavished upon the loves of living beings, they are such and so many that the richest palette would be insufficient to depict them or the poet's words to describe them. Here are two pictures from my meager collection.

I

I AM in the garden, lying down upon a wall so low that I can voluptuously scent the soft aroma of the earth damped by a storm; I have no rugs under my body or pillows under my head; a slate, furrowed and shining, is my bed. With one hand extended above the wall, I am nipping the petals of a lemon flower, while with the other I am frightening the ants which hustle about in the sandy path. All at once, two little shadows, two brown sprites, pass before my eyes and alight, facing me, in the middle of the path. They are two children of heaven, all wings and all beauty; the organs of terrestrial life are reduced to a thread, but a thread that

sucks the nectar from the flowers, and four gigantic wings to conquer the skies. Their hours are numbered; they must love and die, and nature made them warm and swift for intense love: organs of sense greater than the venter, organs of beauty greater than the entrails. They are butterflies, but I know not their names, and I feel disappointed. I look around in vain for an entomologist to name them for me: man does not feel that he possesses a creature unless he has sprinkled it with the ink of his dictionaries. They will die, as far as I am concerned, nameless; and in vain will they knock at the gates of paradise, to enter the place where dear and beloved things are remembered. Can you imagine ever having loved a woman whose name you know not? As in religion, so it is in love: baptism is the first and holiest of sacraments.

But these butterflies love each other without baptism; they are frolicking on the pebbles of the path, and running after each other. They do not suspect that the greatest tiger of our planet is watching them, and that a great lizard is creeping down slowly from the little wall and turns its head to left and right sullenly, licking its own lips with its forked tongue and anticipating the savory taste of the delicate flesh of those pretty creatures. They are too happy to think of enemies that surround them; and life and love are flowers which are picked in the midst of hurricanes and battles. They have found a stalk of withered grass which, under the footsteps of many pedestrians and in the sand strewn by the gardener, has succeeded in living and blossoming. That microscopic bush is an entire world for those two lovers, and the little female resorts to it as to a defense against her sweet assailant and runs around it like a child who flees from blows by running around a table. But, after a few impatient circumvolutions, the lover jumps over that little tree and with his wings shakes those of his companion. A pinch of golden dust spreads through the air, and a slightly spiteful shrug, a rebuff and a voluptuous quiver close that first scene of love. At times the little female seems about to yield to the impatient embraces of her companion; and when he, with

the trepid anxiety of him who is about to grasp happiness, is very close to her and on the point of touching with his pubescent and loving antennæ the velvety body of his beloved one, she flies two yards away, and he after her and again and again is met with mockery and cajoleries. The heat increases and the surcharged desire has become as ardent as the sun. The coquette has turned her back to her pursuer and opens her wings slowly in order to show the splendor of her gems, her silver, her velvet, in all their pomp; and having shown them, she folds and raises her wings and instantly hides all the most splendid dress with which nature has made her so beautiful. Nor is the male less of a seducer, as with a little bound, which resembles a flight, he places himself in front of his companion, and in turn opens his wings, showing his thousand colors and the charm of his golden eyes. But too restless is the impatience of those two lovers who exchange their first kisses. Whoever has witnessed but once the caresses of two butterflies can certainly imagine how the angels love; but does any planet shelter a human creature that lives with wings also in heaven?

Now those two butterflies come near to each other, so near as to touch, to kiss with their antennæ; then in a wink one bounds upon the other and with a leisurely, sweet, prolonged caress, fondly they kiss each other with their wings. And then they repose, as though they wished to relish the sweetness of that grand and voluptuous caress, in which the wing of the one softly and slowly kisses the silk and velvet of his companion. How sweet, how sensual must be the caress of two wings which with a thousand scintillating papillæ touch each other in a perfect juxtaposition, and yet in this intermingling of nerves and velvet do not lose one single speck of that golden dust which adorns them!

Many and many a time I saw those happy creatures prance around and kiss each other; many a time I stood with beaming eye, envying that angelic kiss of two wings. Man may, indeed, envy the butterfly which in its rich loves of glittering inspiration puts to shame our corporeal embraces. Two crea-

tures, nude yet clothed, passionate and chaste, that love but once and one creature only, that kiss on earth and unite in the skies; that, inebriated with the nectar of flowers and the rays of the sun, caress each other with their wings and fall in love with such beautiful hues as Titian and Rubens strove in vain to obtain from their art and their chemistry; two creatures that abandon life in a long love and from the spasms of a leisurely embrace return to nature their bodies extinguished by love!

After long kisses and many caresses, my two angels exchanged a last, more ardent rebuff, and then away in the sky to relight the torch of life which was soon to be extinguished in them. Sighing, I followed them, now united in a whirling flight, until they were lost in the azure of the skies. Why do we not also love in that way?

II

On my neighbor's roof the first rays of the sun have stirred up an infernal racket. Among the tiles, tawny and corroded by the black wartwort, there are some soft cushions of moss, and on the eaves, with edges frayed by rust and twisted by the alternating of sun and ice, grows some grass that, more frugal than an anchoret and happier than a king, lives on light and dew. On those tiles and on those eaves all the sparrows in the neighborhood have their rendezvous; and, sprightly, petulant, noisy, they pursue each other, intermingle with their wings, and clash, peck, play with their little feathered bodies. They speak a common and inharmonious language, but they seem to narrate the dreams of the night, and to have many and important things to tell each other. One shrieks, another warbles, a third is chirping; not one is still. Happy because they have slept well, having already forgotten yesterday, and unmindful of today, they are basking their feathers in the first rays of the sun, and, beaks hidden under their wings, waging war upon some importunate acarus. There are some small and some big.

The gray, the coppery, and the black with slight variations of hues indicate, perhaps, to the naturalist age and sex, perhaps even varieties of species; but in this moment they are all kindred chattering and enjoying themselves together. No difference of caste seems to humiliate one and elate another; no infirmity produces pain in some of them and compassion in others; here is neither etiquette of rank nor hypocrisy of compliments. Have they, those dear and happy young sparrows, carried into effect the republic of Plato?

But, lo! in that crowd of thoughtless, happy creatures I behold a sparrow of a deeper black, a darker chestnut hue, and more high-chested than the others. Frequently he stands upright on his small legs, stretches his neck, his body, his head, like a child about to have his height measured, and, without moving from his place, he looks to the right and to the left with an air of indefinable, vain complacency. And, lo! among his neighbors he sees a female sparrow, of a plain gray color, with an elongated body, delicate and pretty. She seems to have been made for the ivory hand of a lady to hold, thrusting out her loving head from that nest of intelligent folds that is the hand of a woman. The impudent sparrow sees her and, without approaching, utters a cry of conquest which in force and petulance already seems to be a cry of victory. It appears to me that in the sparrow's dictionary that sound must be a word with great significance and important consequences, because the pretty little female with a short flight leaves the noisy crowd of her companions and draws near to the edge of the roof. But the bold lover impatiently flies after her and repeatedly renews his insistent, petulant cry; he is already very close to her, but the little female flies to the roof of the house on the opposite side of the street. She has hardly reached it when the male overtakes her, and at short distance they both face and defy each other; and, twittering in different voices, they hurl at each other a world of words which seem to me insolence and tenderness at the same time. The one whines, the other shrills; the one implores, the other commands, and frequently the prating is so closely intermingled that it seems like the

sound of one instrument. But the bickering appears to have fatigued them, and the pretty little female withdraws, running to an eave, while the male looks up at the sun and awaits new strength. And strength seems to be restored to him very soon, for the warbling and shrieking begin anew. Nor is the insolent lover satisfied with his voice, but runs by leaps and flights to peck his companion; and a hasty retreat, a confused crying, a continual clashing succeed each other at brief intervals through the mossy labyrinths of that roof. Already many battles have been fought between the two lovers; the anxiety to escape and to defend herself from wanton desires seems so sincere in that winged little female that I almost begin to believe that she does not want to be loved that morning. But, if this be really so, why does she not open her wings and fly away into the infinite sky? And if she does not love that too obstinate persecutor, why does she call him when he, piqued, flies to the top of the roof, almost simulating indifference or vexation? But desire cannot stand that war any longer, and the male is now decided to seize the sweet prize of victory, and as if sliding down on those tiles, with short leaps that seem steps he pursues his companion, who withdraws to a corner of the roof where it projects over the street. Behind her she has not an inch of space left: she must either fly away and lose, perhaps, her lover, already tired of so many refusals, or capitulate. Fractions of an inch seem to have become infinite space, measured as they are by male and female with steps and leaps; and the female raises her voice louder and louder at intervals, but does not succeed in drowning the more robust and courageous voice of the lover who is now so close to her as to touch her with his beak and shake her with his wings. The two little warm bodies come into contact, clash, commingle. There, on the extreme brink of the eave, with her little body suspended over the abyss, the female concedes the crowning voluptuousness to her companion, and a sweet inspiration and a rebuff which seems like a flash of lightning attend an ardent, intimate, fulmineous love, a love caught over the abyss of space.

The two lovers fall in a swoon; they rise slowly and stare at each other, amazed and languid; then, with a shiver, they adjust their feathers, disarranged by the embrace; with a second shiver they absorb slowly, slowly the last quaver of the vanishing voluptuousness, and away they fly to hide in some hospitable tree their happy lassitude and to restore their strength for new battles and new loves.

These two pictures, which I have rapidly sketched from nature, are only poor specimens from an immense collection, rich in the warmest tints and in the most singular designs. In no function does life multiply its forces as in love, and the queerest phenomena are interlaced around the union of the sexes, which, unique in essence, assumes the most varied forms. The philosopher, the poet, the artist, should study with interest the thousand ways in which living beings exchange the germinative gemmulæ, and they would find subjects for profound meditation and a strong incentive to inspiration. Only in the eyes of the hypocrite or of the idiot many loves of living beings may seem brutal battles or lascivious embraces. Nowhere does Nature manifest herself more powerful, more inexhaustible, more admirable than where she teaches the living how to perpetuate life. It is well to conceal, as far as possible, from the eyes of our children, especially from little girls, the too obscene intercourses of those domestic animals which most resemble us. However, the most rigorous morals in the world and the most puritanical modesty would be unable to hide the kisses of doves, the amorous duets of canaries, the sublime embraces of butterflies. More than one maiden had in these pictures of nature her first lesson of love; and many years before the lips of a lover taught her the life in two, doves, canaries, butterflies had caused her heart to throb, disclosing to her a corner in the realm of infinite and glowing mysteries.

CHAPTER II

MORNING CREPUSCULES OF LOVE—THE GOOD AND EVIL SOURCES OF LOVE

A HUMAN being of a low order or of a simple nature does not feel the energy of that new sentiment called love rise within him until the development of the germinative glands has marked in him the character of the sex and made of that being a man or a woman. On the other hand, in rich and powerful natures, many years before sex has impressed its deep mark on the organism, a vague, mysterious and chaste sympathy attracts the young boy toward the young girl. There, where the sun of the infinite azure of the skies is to rise, one notices a rosy tint lightly projected on the horizon, but sufficient to warn us: "There must the greatest star shine some day, the father of all light." The sun is ever the most beautiful among all the beautiful things of the skies, and I have studied with warm and constant affection, watched with religious attention the first crepuscules of that other sun which we are now studying in this book. They appear without being invited by the precocious corruption of books and of neighbors, they rise spontaneously in the heart of the most unconscious innocence; they shine like serene and calm rays of a light that later will be ardent and fascinating. They appear and disappear, like flashes of lightning, flashes which noiselessly illuminate the clouds and then leave them darker than before. A vulgar and coarse malignity repeats a blasphemy every day when it asserts that no child is ignorant of the secrets of love. The innocence of childhood is truer, more sincere and deeper than is supposed, and lasts limpid and adamantine even when it has been splashed with the mud of social corruption.

The rosy lips of a child may repeat, with an expression of lascivious malice, a jest learned by chance from a maid-servant or from a libertine, but that stain does not penetrate into the crystalline nature of the child, and the spray of a fountain will be sufficient to wash the trace away. The malignant rabble is wont to doubt of the innocence of others, just as the wicked is to deny all virtue.

In the infantile songs, in the noisy and turbulent games which form the delight of the first age, suddenly a young boy beholds a little girl among a hundred, among a thousand; and an instantaneous sympathy ties the rosy knot of a nameless affection, of an innocent, unwitting love, which may seem at the same time the caricature and the miniature of a sublime picture. I remember having seen an angelic little girl, blonde as an ear of wheat and rosy as the aurora, throw her arms around the neck of a little boy as haughty as a brigand and as dark as a pirate. And the impudent little thing would cover him with kisses, and he would disdain and resent these cajoleries; and she would tell him that she loved him very much, that she wanted to make of him her little bridegroom. A reversed world, a microscopic scene of a chaste Joseph who did not know what woman was, and a Lilliputian woman who, in the innocent ardors of a childish embrace, seemed to be the wife of Potiphar and was nothing but an angel. However, this sudden movement of affection between two children of different sex conceals sometimes a true and real passion which has haughty jealousies, tears and sighs, delirious joys, a history, a future.

The beautiful young girls whom a kind or a cruel nature has destined to arouse at every step of life a desire or a sigh, often ignore the fact that in the multitude of their adorers there are boys so small as to seem babies and who kiss in secret the flowers that have fallen from their bosoms; who furtively and mysteriously, like domestic thieves, steal into the little room that shelters their angel to kiss her bed, to kneel on the carpet which that woman treads—that woman whom they already distinguish above all the creatures in the world, whom they dare already to place on the same level as

their mother. And how often a woman who playfully runs her fingers through the locks of a boy laying his head upon her knees, is unconscious of a little heart that beats loudly, loudly, under those caresses; unconscious, when the child raises his curly head, of the cause of his flush, which does not come from congestion, but from burning with a fire of which he himself is ignorant, but which is love.

These rosy phantoms, which gild some of the most beautiful hours of our child-life, seem to last only as long as the morning twilight; and certainly the battles of youth often cause them to be forgotten. And many, with slippery memories and skeptical hearts, when they hear them mentioned have only words of contempt and gestures of pity for what they are pleased to term infantile lullabies to be relegated among the horrors of the witches and the caresses of the nurse. And yet how often these fleeting phantoms announce the storms of the future, reveal a deeply enamored nature and weave the first threads of a long fabric of delirious joys and torments! Some very, very fortunate mortal, on his death-bed, could press the hand of the only woman he had ever loved, whom he had loved when still a child, before he even knew she was a woman. The trembling lips of the dying man could link the last kiss of life with the first noisy, insolent, clumsy kiss on the soft cheek of a ten-year-old girl. And without trying to reach this loftiest sphere of an ideal too far removed from our existence, how often, after a long life hardened by the tortures of a hundred passions, after having lost faith and love, in the dusk of the early evening a last rosy flash of sunset awakened a dear memory, buried many years since, and the heart of an old man throbbed and a tear ran down his wrinkled face! Before the weary eyes a little straw hat had passed, with two blue streamers, but in the depths of the heart what an abyss of dear memories had opened in an instant! In the night of the past, a limpid ray of light had illumined a picture all life and all beauty; an antique cameo had appeared under the pick of the grave-digger, among ruins and dust! And that picture was a childish love, a flower carried away by the turbid torrent of

a storm, but preserved by the friendly hand of memory, which, after all, is not always ungrateful or cruel.

If you ask a boy why he loves a little girl, he will blush and run away; if you ask the little girl, her face will flush and she will answer with a sublime impertinence. They love—*and they know not why!* Ask a precocious rosebud why it wanted to bloom in March, instead of awaiting the warm and voluptuous air of May; ask a July cyclamen why it did not await the cool breezes of September to perfume the mossy bed in which it had made its nest. *They love, and they know not why!* In passionate men the first light of love appears sooner, because Nature, fruitful and impatient, longs to give her flowers, and an entire life will be for them too short a day to satisfy the intense thirst of love which consumes them. They love soon because they love much; as men of genius, at ten years of age, often conceive that which the masses will never conceive at thirty.

And why, my boy, do you prefer that little girl to all the others? And why, my pretty girl, do you allow yourself to be kissed only by the lips of that dark, impertinent little beau? Because that little girl differs from all the others; because that dark lad is unlike any other boy. Love, from its first and most indistinct appearance, is selection, a deep and irresistible sympathy of different natures, the recomposition of discomposed forces, the equilibrium of opposites, the complement of dissociated things; the harmony of harmonies; the most gigantic, the most prepotent of the affinities of attraction!

Aside from the precursory crepuscules of natures most powerful in love, this sentiment, in ordinary men, rises when a new want springs forth under the rod of that magical transformer which is puberty. At that time, on the smooth, pubescent, roundish surface of the infantile nature, a deep crevice opens; a void is formed which woman alone can fill; then, that little, round, smooth fruit called *little girl* also sheds its childish skin, disclosing the juicy and delicate flesh of the fruit which was hidden in it. Then, from every developed muscle of the virile organism, from every sound

of its strengthened voice, from every hair that makes its skin hirsute, there rises a powerful cry which demands in the loudest tone: *A woman!* And from every flexuous limb of the girl who has become a woman, from every quiver of the hair which makes her proud, from every pore of the young girl who has become a crater of burning desires, arises a cry which demands: *A man!*

The passage of the fatal bridge that separates adolescence from youth is one of the epochs most burdened with anxieties, most merry with convulsive joys, and for this I call it the *hysterical period of life.* I shall illustrate it, perhaps, some day, in a work which I am preparing on the ages of man. I shall here describe with few, wide strokes of the pen how the necessity of loving makes itself felt to most men. And if I have referred to woman most of the time, it is because she, more chaste, more reserved, and yet a hundred times more in need of love, feels more deeply the shudder which announces to her the appearance of the new god; more innocent than we are, she does not know his nature; more timid, she has a greater fear of him. Nature conceded to man common resources almost unknown to woman, and only too often precocious vice makes him acquainted sooner with voluptuousness than with love. When he is chaste, virtuous and impassioned, he also feels the same raging tumult, which stirs his soul; he too, somber, melancholy, frantic, demands of nature, with the accents of wrath and plaintive lamentations: *A woman!*

To this cry answers, alas! only too often, the first comer. It is impossible for certain natures to resist a long time the tortures of robust and vigorous chastity: the frail human shell would fall to pieces if it persisted in keeping imprisoned an accumulation of forces, all gigantic, all fresh, all ready for the battle. The first love is not slow to appear; and if the neophyte who appears on the horizon lacks more than two-thirds of the desired virtues, Love is such a magician that he can create them and transform a worm into a god.

The maiden in her dreams, by looking at the pictures in

the church and within the domestic walls, had fancied a winged man with nothing earthly and material but two lips to kiss. The object desired by her was an angel, all love and all ether, who would gather under his large folded wings the soul of the young girl and carry it away, through the space of heaven, to a golden region, all light and warmth. The quivering of the wings and the velvet of a kiss were all the voluptuousness which the chaste virgin ever thought of dreaming; and beyond it, an obscure and infinite mystery of which she knew neither name, nor confines, nor form. And instead of this angel, she beholds a man in trousers, with mustaches, who smokes much and slanders women; perhaps his hair is already turning gray, already he may be a husband and a father—but he is a man.

And the youth, too, had dreamed of his angel. She should have been all eyes, all locks of hair; divinely slender, with feet which would hardly touch the earth, eternal smile wreathed in an aureole of light, a soul ardent as fire and an innocence as pure as the snow that falls upon the summits of the Jungfrau. And, instead, she who wakes us from the dream of the night is the provocative, stout maid-servant who by her contours only, distinct and strong as they are, shows nothing but that she is much of a woman, and instead of wings she has two sinewy arms and two hands hardened from the use of pot and broom; and, far from having winged feet, she pounds the floor with pattens that seem to be soled with iron—but she is a woman.

Anything is good and enough for a first love, which is nearly always a million of hunger and a penny of bread. How vulgar is the object of that enamored young girl's thoughts! The heart of a grocer in the body of a porter! But he is pallid, and the hebetude of his stare seems sentimental languor to her; he is ill, and to her his illness appears poetic; he is robust, and for her he is the god of strength; he is arrogant, but to her he is passionate; he is an egotist, and so much the better, for he will love but her, who alone will know how to make him happy. How much poetry that ardent youth has launched to the skies, when he sang the

exciting form of a strong peasant woman! How many elegies has he not wept, thinking of the bluish paleness of a cholerotic working-woman! Woe, if seduction accompanies all this texture of lies with which too often the first love builds its nest! Woe, if to the inexperienced maiden the aged libertine says, with the accent acquired from long practice: "I love you!" Woe, if the lascivious old woman, satisfying her old appetite with unripe fruit, knows how to warm the innocent youth at the fire of new voluptuousness! Then the fire is kindled, the flames spread, and the first object loved is placed on the altar with vows of eternal fealty, and perfumed with the incense of the maddest, most unrestrained idolatry.

The first love is not always born so evilly, but it too closely resembles, alas! these first loves which I have just described. Let us be sincere from the very first steps in our studies, for hypocrisy is the wood-worm that in modern society cuts into and corrodes the highest and strongest tree in the garden of life. The original sin of love appears to us with its first cry, and even when we have been forced to use all the artifices of the galvanoplastic to gild our idol, even when the bellows of imagination have worked to inflame the first love, the very first thing we say is a lie: "I love you above everything in this world; I shall love you forever. You are my first love, and one can love but once." And a second vow answers the first, perhaps more sacred and more ardent; and in a kiss, that is often the sum of two lies, the first hypocrisy is sealed, which down to the last generation of the loves of those two beings will seal with an everlasting mark all the expressions of affection, all the cravings of the heart.

Be sincere with the first kiss, if you desire love to be the chief joy of life, not a shameful trade of voluptuous lies. Yes, yours is the first love, but because it is the first it is neither true nor just nor natural that it should be the greatest, the one, the only love. Do not swear falsely, do not perjure yourselves before you know what truth is. To the eternity of your vows, the indifference of tomorrow will answer with a sardonic, mocking grin. Before you have

really loved, you will sing in every tune that virtue does not exist, that love is a dream, and, children and elders at the same time, you will forswear a god whose temple you have never seen.

You are two: a man and a woman; and you say that you love each other, and perhaps it is first love for both. Well, then, during the first days do not swear, if you still value the word of an honest man, and if perjury still has terrors for you. Rarely is the first love true love, as the first book of an author rarely is the true expression of his genius. One is weak from excessive youth as from old age; and the one and first and only love, like many other dogmatic formulas which delight so much that pedantic and hypocritical biped called man, has made more victims in modern society than many crimes and many maladies of body and mind ever did. If your love is the first, so much the better; with hands chastely clasped and lips modestly conjoined, do not pronounce any other words but these: "Let us love each other!" If you are among the few and happy mortals who will love but once; if you are among the very few who, in the first woman or in the first man, have found the angel seen in their first dreams of youth, thousand and thousand times blessed! The fidelity of the future will cement for life the virtues of your souls. As for myself, if the increased progress of true and healthy democracy should eliminate from juridical institutions the formula of the oath, I would wish that the man and the woman who love each other should never swear. An adjuration less and a caress more, what a delight! An eternity less, and a longer caress, what voluptuousness! Nor should chaste and chosen souls throw my book away, feeling hurt by my cynic advice. If they will read the pages that follow, they will clearly see that no one more than I intends to elevate love to the most serene regions of the ideal, and that, however high sentiment can ascend, I, also, feel the strength to follow it. The triple and thick skin of hypocrisy that enwraps us from infancy, the Arcadic varnish which makes us look polished and brilliant, nearly always forbid us to see the true nature of things, and in love we are all

unmistakably counterfeiters. The greatest liberty, the greatest sincerity alone can cure us of this malady, which is civil rather than national, because it penetrates every race, every social class; it does not spare the highest and strongest natures; it has become an integral part of every fiber of our hearts, of the framework of all our institutions.

Which are the true sources of love? Which are the paths that lead to the sacred temple? There should be an only source, an only path, but so many are those who throng and crowd to enter there, where all expect the greatest joy, that not all enter by the great highway of nature, but through secret gates and oblique ways reach their aim; they are unhappy because the original sin of their loves condemns them to a dangerous life sown with despondency and bitterness.

All the natural flows of the true and great love collect in one source. They are drops which slowly trickle into the depths of our body, and there they gather and form rivulets and streamlets that, in turn, collect in the channel of our veins until they effuse as the warm, quivering wave of *sympathy*.

Sympathy is the only and true source of love. *Sympathy,* most beautiful among the beautiful words of human speech! To suffer together, a melancholy vaticination of life lived in two; but better still, to feel, laugh and weep together! Two organisms, but one sense; two exterior worlds, but which unite around a unique center; two nerves that by various ways carry various sensations, but which interweave and run together in one heart. To see, to gaze at, to desire each other. A spark shoots forth from the contact of two desires: such is the first fact of love. Two solitary ships in the desert of the ocean were plowing through the waves, unknown to each other; the wind propelled one near to the other; a shiver of sympathy ran through the sails and the shrouds and caused them to creak simultaneously; they felt pressed by a common need, and cast out a hawser which should tie them together. From that moment they shall

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plow the same waters, expose themselves to the same dangers, and long and sigh for the same land.

The most rapid and ardent sympathies have their sources in the admiration of form, that is to say, in the sentiment of the beautiful which is satisfied by the object which we desire and are about to love. Among the four definitions of love that Tasso was wont to discuss, there are three which express or suggest this idea: "Love is a desire of beauty; Love is the cupidity of embrace for the pleasure of those who covet a particular beauty; Love is the union through pleasure of beauty." And, in fact, what is love if not the choice of the better forms in order to perpetuate them? What is love if not the selection of the best in order that it may triumph over the mediocre, a selection of youth and strength in order that it may survive the old and weak elements? Woman, the custodian of germs, the vestal of life, must be more beautiful than we, and man loves in her the form above all other things; and mediocre forms can, if elevated by a gigantic genius and an impassioned heart, still excite ardent passions. But these are always unstable sympathies, and where a real deformity appears, love is dead, or lives only as a prodigy of heroism, or as an esthetic malady. Woman also is immediately affected by the beauty of virile forms and can love a man merely because he is handsome; but in her the field of sympathy expands and is much higher, and character and genius will seduce her more frequently than is the case with men. The ugliest men enjoyed the superhuman voluptuousness of being loved; but in the attitude of their characters, in the power of their genius, in the greatness of their position, they possessed a fascination which belonged, nevertheless, to the world of beauty. Woman has within herself such a power of transmission of the germinative elements and such an accumulation of beauty as to be capable of doing without the power and the beauty of her companion; but she wants to feel conquered by a superior force, fascinated by something that shines or flashes or thunders.

In love, genius and character exercise very little influence

if they do not assume a beautiful form, and esthetics dominate and govern all amorous phenomena. This is not enough: even those who believe that their judgment in making a selection soars to the loftiest spheres of the ideal world, and despise the beautiful as a vulgar fascination of dull and clouded minds, seek, involuntarily, unknowingly, some virtues that bear a deep sexual mark. There may be a philosopher who boasts of having loved a homely but intelligent and sensible woman; but let him search the depths of his heart, let him study the sources of his love, and he will find that he admires and loves in his companion those virtues which are essentially feminine: the flexuous grace of tenderness and the kind intelligence of the heart, or the insuperable cleverness of affection, or the coquettish forms of a refreshing and modest intellect. In other words, the proud despiser of form was seduced by the form, all beautiful and all feminine, of a character or of an intelligence. And woman, when she happens to love an ugly man, is conquered either by dominating intellect, by dazzling ambition, by heroic courage, or by the power of some virtues that bear a deeply virile mark. Sex is too great a portion of the economy of life to be eliminated from our calculations by our caprice, and love is a stream too large to be dammed and directed between the paper dikes of our sophisms and our reticences; and if some one should not be convinced yet that beauty is the supreme inciter of every amorous sympathy, let him remember that love is the passion of youth, and this is always a chosen form of beauty.

It rarely happens that two flashes from the eyes of a man and of a woman who meet for the first time should kindle one fire only. This is the ideal of the most ardent sympathies, the most fortunate combination in the great, hazardous game of life. To meet suddenly, to see, to admire, to desire each other at once and to embrace with such a look as if it came from above; to feel inundated by a gaze, equally warm and penetrating; to blush together and to feel all at once that two hearts beat louder and mutely make this sweet

confession: "I love you, and you are mine!"—all this is a joy too rare, too beautiful, one which few mortals have known and few will know.

It happens more frequently that nascent sympathies proceed unequally, so that the one has already carried a man to the highest summits of desire and passion, while the other hardly begins to stir; the one already throbs, the other only faintly vibrates. Even when two loves are called to high and fortunate destinies, even when they will soon spread their robust wings together in the space of bliss, a task is reserved to woman in the vicissitudes of love, so different from ours that she cannot feel with us the same sudden and violent emotions. Man says everything with a look; unhesitatingly and proudly he acknowledges his defeats. Woman, even under the spell of the most ardent sympathy, lowers her eyelids, refuses the too intense light and protects her heart with all the refrigeratives and sedatives at her command. Man has already said to woman a hundred times with the flash of his eyes: "I love you!" The woman, trembling, hardly dares to say: "Perhaps I will love you!" And away run those two happy beings, fleeing from each other, until the sympathy of the one equals that of the other, until the supreme languor of a long battle is smothered in two notes which vibrate together with the sweetest harmony, while they say to each other, with a sigh, "I love you!" and to nature repeat with another sigh: "Thanks!"

The energies of amorous desire, which the longer they last the larger they grow, follow the laws of elementary physics governing the forces. The most instantaneous love is not the most durable, and if an unexpected satisfaction follows a sudden desire, love may sometimes resemble a glorious rape rather than a true and real passion. It is true that love is not a battle but a long war, and when the first victory is followed by a hundred, a thousand victories, the fulmineous sympathy also may take deep roots in our hearts, and rallying after nearly every struggle, may pervade us all and reach the ideal perfection of coupling intensity with extensiveness, of twinkling at the same time with the light

of those stars that never set and that of the lightning flash that plows the skies. The most perfect love is a sun that never sets, but does cast forth now and then more scintillant flashes. In ordinary cases, however, loves that rise slowly, slowly die away; and those of the nature of lightning last as long as lightning. In all cases, a healthy love, well constituted and destined for a prolific existence, whether born suddenly or slowly, should begin with a violent shock that measures the depths from which the warm sympathy sprang forth. All other affectionate sentiments arise in a manner different from love, whose nature it is to be born amidst thunder and lightning, as gods or demons should be born. Princes cannot come into the world like the masses; and the Prince of Affections cannot come to light with the assistance of an intelligent and affectionate midwife and the domestic cares of relatives. Where a coruscation of the skies and a trembling of the earth do not attend the birth of the new love; where nature does not rend the air with a cry of voluptuousness or of pain, no one can deceive me: a friendship, an affection, some sort of a sentiment, may have come into existence; but I shall certainly not christen the new-born with the sacred baptism of love.

And thus, naturally, we have arrived at those frontiers which separate the only legitimate way by which we may enter the temple from those ways that lead to it through oblique and unused paths. Friendship can be a source of love, and a very good one, but it is always a pathological, unnatural origin, which leads step by step to the worst of the sources of love, such as gratitude, compassion, vanity, lust, revenge.

When one has been able to see a woman during a long time, talk to her and perhaps live with her without calling her by any other name but that of sister or friend, if he feels some day that he loves her, such love resembles those tropical fruits grown in our climate by means of manure and hothouse. Whether friendship is possible between man and woman is an old problem which will never be solved, because many give that name to true, real loves, which, approaching

the threshold of desire, held back, perhaps, by the rigid hand of duty, oscillate suavely and lingeringly in front of the temple without ever entering it. It is by a conventional politeness that to these loves we give the name of friendship, and I will certainly not condemn such innocent falsification; but a true and real friendship, with all the specific characteristics that distinguish this serene affection between man and woman, is not possible except on one condition: to obliterate every sexual mark in the two beings that have shaken hands. And the elimination of the sex in an individual is such a cruel mutilation, both physical and moral, that it destroys more than half of man. If friendship unites two eunuchs of this kind, I shall say that their affection is no longer that which exists between man and woman, but that of two neutral beings. However, as long as a single desire of the other's person is possible in them, as long as the most chaste, the most innocent of desires may arise in them, friendship becomes love. How many are these moral eunuchs? How many men and women can love without desire? Count them and then I shall be able to tell you how many are the cases, well ascertained, of *friendship without love* between man and woman.

I wish, nevertheless, to be more explicit, so that I may not seem to go on beating about the bushes without attacking and solving the question because I find it difficult. Are there in this sublunary world a man and a woman glad to see each other, who love each other and who have never desired even a kiss from each other? Yes; those two angels, then, are friends and I admit the possibility of the psychological phenomenon of friendship between two persons of different sex.

From any form of mild affection one can pass to love, and therefore much more easily from that friendship between man and woman knowingly admitted by us as possible. Long-lasting and healthy loves may arise in this way, but they always have a cold skin and a somewhat lymphatic hue. They require restoratives, a hydropathic cure, and, sometimes, cod-liver oil as well, because from the lymphatic they

may also pass to the scrofulous stage. A common variety of this kind of loves is that which originates from gratitude.

"Love who to none beloved to love remits" sang the poet, and he told the truth; but this goes on one condition, that between the two who love each other there shall be no other difference but in the length of the step; that is to say, that one should arrive first and the other join him afterward; otherwise they would never meet on the main road of sympathy. You, O tutors, who believe in the love of a pupil; you, gentlemen, who believe in the love of the orphan girl whom you have helped out of her poverty; you, old bachelors, who believe in the love of the grateful chambermaid, remember that gratitude alone did never generate a legitimate love. If gratitude takes you by the hand and leads you on the road of sympathy, it may be a good guide, but nothing more. There are men and women who very much resemble cold-blooded animals, which have the same temperature as the ambient that surrounds them, but can generate little or no heat. They know not how to love of themselves, and it is necessary that another love descend upon them to soak them, to saturate them, like cake dipped in wine. Their sympathies are cold and equal for all; they often ask of books and men what is love, and compare the descriptions by others to what they feel in their hearts, like the naturalist who turns and turns an insect in his hands, compares it to the pictures before him, and finally exclaims: "It really seems to me that this insect is the *Amor verus* of the entomologists. I, too, do love, really love." For all these gentlemen, whose number is much greater than supposed, the verse of the poet is most true, and they always love out of gratitude or compassion, which is almost the same.

That mild and sweet affection which is love out of gratitude must not be confused with that commiseration which women especially feel for those who love them desperately, and to whom they often concede not love, but love out of pity. Woman is easily moved; she cannot look on apathetically when a man suffers, and frequently yields, not out of lewdness but of pity, which is also coupled with the legiti-

mate pride of being able to transform a wretched being into a happy man. And man often takes advantage of this weakness of Eve and wickedly abuses it, and is ready, later, to calumniate her who has made him happy. Man, too, can love out of compassion, but more frequently concedes himself without affection and through pride, as we shall see further on in the course of our studies.

Woman, however, sometimes concedes love, together with voluptuousness, to him who weeps, sighs and suffers for her. Compassion is the benevolent chord which vibrates even in natures brutally egotistical; while in woman, rich in so many affections, it can vibrate until it tortures her. This sentiment, however, is, of its own nature, tender and mild, and by placing a hand on him who suffers, keeps him always in a state of subjection, so that true equality can never exist between the one who inspires compassion and the one who feels it. This is the essential character of compassion; and even when, by narrow, long and thorny paths, it leads us to love, this is always under the influence of its bastardly origin. All loves out of compassion are forms of affectionate commiseration, of benign protection, and lack the highest notes of passion. They strongly resemble the verses of him who is not a poet; the god of fire does not pervade, does not inflame them; they do not know the sacred agitation of the sibyl; and if they can live long in a mild climate, they can, however, be suddenly overthrown by the appearance of the true god, who demands his rights, his tributes of blood and of ardors. The woman who, unfortunately, has not yet experienced any love other than that inspired in her by compassion, may deceive herself, may believe that she loves truly and deeply; but woe to her, if a real and warm sympathy should awake in her heart, that she may make a comparison between the true love and the false one! The weak little plant of an affection long guarded by commiseration will fall and be carried away by the fury of the impetuous stream, and the poor creature, who really loves for the first time, may suffer the most excruciating pain, and be made to fight the bloodiest struggles between duty and passion, between com-

miseration and love. I know only too well that among the thousand forms of cowardly love there is also the cowardice which begs love on bended knees, but I would prefer to be loved by caprice, revenge or lechery, rather than by compassion. The woman who loves us in that way has always her heel on our heads; and although the sweet pressure of a woman's little foot may be as dear as the caress of her hand, in the face of nature we commit an act of cowardice and invert the most elementary laws of the physiology of the sexes. The man who waives the primacy of conquest is a lion that allows his mane to be shorn, a Samson with clipped hair, always a mild and disguised form of eunuch. May fortune protect you all from love out of compassion!

A still more turbid source of love is vanity; to hear that a woman is very beautiful and chaste, that she has never permitted herself to be loved, is an immediate stimulus of sudden ambition to the man who knows that he is strong and adores the daughters of Eve. And the daughters of Eve, in turn, very willingly persist in throwing the baited hook to catch the cold, lonely fish who lives in the most dark recesses of solitude and chastity. Hence many challenges sent and taken which lead oftener to a conquest of bodies than to true love. The great woman-lovers, who have long since renounced the virtue of sublime love, are accustomed to conquer all the conquerable solely for vanity's sake, solely to tie with amorous chains to their triumphal chariot a new slave and a new victim. They nearly always like to conquer the most difficult and different characters, and you may find them ardently wishing to give the first lesson in voluptuousness to the innocent as well as to subjugate the most cunning and oldest libertines. Besides vanity, the goad of morbid curiosity has its share in this choice of victims, as curiosity is one of the strongest threads in the psychological web of woman. A tart, wild fruit may stimulate the appetite of a palate too dull, as would the mordant pungency of cheese too old; the frivolous woman is passionately fond of this alternating of sour and burning tastes, of this succession of men inexperienced in love and men only too well versed in

it; and lechery may go so far in these natures as to cause them to love through mere curiosity of the unknown, even excluding lust, which is not always necessary in these pathological tastes. At any rate, even when vanity alone has brought a man and a woman together, a posthumous sympathy may awaken a real love with healthy members and a long life. It is, however, always a love that resembles the rich man who was born a peasant and, true upstart that he is, may, in the midst of luxury and pleasure and in the most courteous manner, kick you out of his presence when you least can afford it. To be born well is really the first problem of life in all cases, and democracy itself cannot succeed in overthrowing the ancient aristocracy unless it can boast of a legitimate and noble birth.

Man, who daily accuses of vanity his female companion, shows oftener than the latter the most grotesque and clownish forms of that sentiment; and we rarely see him renounce the puerile ostentation of those of his loves which had the bastardly origin of vanity. How often has he reached the lowest stage of cowardice by casting up to the woman who blessed him with love, that he sought her love only to adorn with another trophy his triumphal chariot! Woman, instead, almost always, even when she has desired to be loved out of vanity alone, even when she is about to dismiss the servant who has wearied her, will give him a testimonial which makes him happy, does not humiliate him, and will satisfy him that he pleased—for a day, a month, a year—the woman who, perhaps, feigned to love him, or loved him very blandly. No man feels humiliated in thinking that he was the sweet victim of a caprice; all feel dejected if made the target of a vainglorious speculation. And many other times, woman, with a very refined and generous tact, pretends not to understand that she is desired and loved solely out of vanity, and gradually succeeds in making men love her for herself, and for herself alone. The *friendly enemy* not perceiving it, she succeeds with subtle art in substituting a sincere and warm passion for the narrow ambition that had inspired the attack and the conquest: one of the thousand proofs that

woman is superior to us in sentiment in the same degree as we are superior to her in mental strength; one of the thousand proofs that woman always endeavors to elevate even the basest loves, while we so often want to force under the Caudine Forks of voluptuousness even those loves which, like the eagles, were born on the highest rocks of psychology.

Lust is the prolific mother of most vulgar loves; nay, this sentiment is to many only the necessity of drinking at a spring found to be sweeter than any other. Nude love, without the splendid garments of imagination and heart, stripped even of the robust flesh lent to it by the sentiment of the beautiful, is reduced to a skeleton which is lust and which for very many is all they think of love. What a poor, wretched thing! A practice of lasciviousness! Woman converted into a cup which we prefer to any other because we have long been accustomed to satiate our thirst out of it. To have possessed before having loved, to have been possessed before having given the kiss of love! What ignominy! What baseness! And yet love is such a magician that, at times, it can perform the prodigy of being born of lechery.

Loves born of lust are the most difficult to preserve, and every day of their life is a difficult and rare conquest. Even the most perfidious cunning of the arts of pleasing blunts against insurmountable difficulties, and woman, after having brought into play all the witchery of body and heart, may see her victim snatched away from her by the first comer. Love may be warm, ardent, thirsty, but the glass that satisfies it is always made of the most fragile crystal and may at any moment fall and be shattered into a hundred pieces.

Revenge, which is a form of hatred, may, by incestuous nuptials, become a mother, or better, a stepmother of love. To be deceived and to know it, to wish to humiliate the guilty by flaunting in the latter's face a new love, to seek it, finding it in one day: there is the source of love out of revenge. The unfortunate paranymph who acts as the call-bird of a degraded passion does not always perceive the trap, allows himself to be loved, loves, and often amuses the person who pretends to love him and those who unconcern-

edly witness the shameful spectacle. Vanity makes us blind, and it does not permit us to see that, perhaps, in the period of a day we have been seen, desired, conquered; and while, inflated with pride, we display our feathers like a peacock, we do not realize that we are actors in a comedy staged to humiliate him or her who is loved always and more than ever. In some very humiliating cases we serve as rubefacient and sink so low as to be placed on a level with a mustard poultice or a leech; and the cure effected at our expense is so quick and perfect that we are immediately dismissed, like a physician who is impatiently paid and impatiently taken leave of because his services are no longer required.

These, however, are the most unfortunate cases, and belong to the ugliest pathology of the human heart; in other instances love out of revenge becomes, through the virtue of either or both of the lovers, a true and real love which cures the old wound and opens a wide horizon of happiness to the man and to the woman who have become acquainted in such a strange manner, and it may then be said that he who was to be the revengeful executioner, the unconscious minister of the justice of love, becomes, instead, first the physician and afterward the lover of the offended, and a new love arises on the ruins of the old one.

I certainly do not claim to have studied all the pure and impure sources of love, but I would feel satisfied if I had touched upon the most important ones, and outlined the genealogy of this sentiment. In an analytical work, however great may be the care exercised in order not to detach adherent things, it is next to impossible to avoid breaking some fiber or destroying anything. It frequently occurs that the source of love is not one, but double, or is formed by the collecting of various streamlets, so that it would be difficult to state whether the new-born is a legitimate son or a bastard. A slight but sincere sympathy may be associated with great vanity, but the desire for revenge may, fortunately for us, fall in with a warm and violent affection. Thus, lust, vanity, compassion, gratitude, may meet at the same time and fecun-

date a love which later may flow limpid and pure in its bed, although its source was an impure, muddy stream.

Sometimes a human being loves another not for the latter's sake, but out of a strange resemblance which the latter bears to a person long loved and, perhaps, already lost; thus it happens that one may love the daughter after having loved the mother; and there have been cases in which one has loved even three successive generations. The excessive disproportion in the age of the lovers, a certain mummy effluvium exhaled even by the most carefully embalmed bodies, gives to those loves a character that induces me to place them at least on the frontiers that separate physiology from pathology; I would, therefore, term them "physio-pathological."

Loves of mixed origin are the purer and warmer, the larger the part played in them by sympathy, and this element alone would suffice to allot a place to them in the hierarchical scale of nobility. The influence which the first origin exercises over love is so lasting and so prepotent that more than once affections suffering from a dangerous illness recovered suddenly at the tender remembrance of these thoughts: "You really loved me one day of your life." "You are mine by love and nothing else." "And yet I loved you!" Often a man born in the highest place and of noblest blood sinks gradually into the mire, loses his dignity, his fortune, even the most superficial appearance of manners and behavior; yet if you observe him attentively you will certainly find in the nobility of some gesture, in the majestic tone of his voice, in some refined taste, such traces of his ancient origin as may have survived the shipwreck. And so it happens with a well-born love. I have seen passions dragged in the mire of abjection, tattered and foul, like a velvet rag picked up in the gutter; I have seen loves sold and bought again, and passed through the hands of a hundred hucksters at the public auction of vice and infamy; but in those poor shreds I have always found something that had remained intact and revealed its ancient and noble origin; and with my own

eyes I have witnessed fabulous resurrections that seemed miracles, and redemptions that caused me to think of the divine intervention and of the galley-slaves too arcadically rehabilitated through the rose-water bath of our modern philanthropists.

When love begins we may entertain some doubts as to the reality of the passion before our eyes. The heart beats more quickly than usual, and in the serene sky some clouds pass and evanesce in the deep azure; perhaps in the distant mist we behold, at times, a lightning flash; but will we have a storm or fine weather? If the heart is forced to answer, it may, in these cases, make the same solemn mistakes as the meteorologists in their almanacs or from the university chair. Embryos in their first stage are all similar, and even the most powerful microscope cannot distinguish today the egg of the lion from that of the rabbit. Incipient sympathies, growing friendships, affinities about to become loves, are all crepuscular things faintly delineated on the gray horizon, and the human eye may be easily deceived; but we cannot cast any blame upon it. And love, too, assumes so manifold and varied disguises as to render it difficult for us to make a good diagnosis in many cases. However, it is always easier to recognize love in our own home than in that of others, notwithstanding the fact that it is much more important for our happiness to know whether we are loved than to realize that we really are in love. To distinguish in others the true love from the mendacious, you may be helped by this physio-psychological essay, while in order to explore your own heart scant attention to the phase of your sentiments will suffice.

One truly loves when to the agonizing cry: "A man!—A woman!" a friendly distant voice replies: "Do not weep; I am here!" One loves when, after hearing that voice, the cry subsides and the deep void of desire is filled. One loves when the desire of the beloved is placed above everything else. One loves when one suddenly blushes or pales if he hears a name or the familiar swish of a garment that approaches. One loves when one involuntarily has on one's lips one name only a hundred times in a day, or when one

ceases to pronounce a word which one was pronouncing a hundred times before. One loves when one's eyes are always fixed on one point of the star-map where the creature dwells who has become half of ourselves. One loves when one hurries to the mirror at every instant to ask of oneself, "Am I beautiful enough?" and when one restlessly explores the abyss of one's own conscience with the query, "Can I be loved?" One loves when in every fiber of the heart, in every atom of the organism, the sap of life is stirred and rushes through every vein and every nerve, so that an intimate, penetrating, deep commotion warns us with thrilling voice that something great and unusual is in us, as though God had visited us. This is the true love, that is not appeased by lust, nor quieted by ambition, nor cooled by distance, that does not even lose itself in the dreams of the night; the love that, to abandon us, must carry away with itself a large piece of bleeding flesh and tortured nerves.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST WEAPONS OF LOVE—COURTSHIP

How subtle and mysterious must that high chemistry be which unites the germinative elements of two organisms of different sex to renew life and generate a new organism! It does not suffice that in the calm and long silence of thirty or forty years, half lived by a man and half by a woman, the gemmulæ have prepared and made ready to call and attract each other; it does not suffice that the powerful energies of sexual affinities have accumulated; it still does not suffice that a sudden sympathy shall prepare the spark and the conflagration. All this long activity of nature has prepared things in order that the great phenomenon may occur; but the atoms that seek each other and ardently desire to unite must long oppose each other in order to rekindle the ardors and centuplicate the energies. To the human male the aggressive mission has been assigned; to the human female, the difficult task of defending herself. The part assigned to man is simple and requires only strength, physical or moral, intellectual or made complex by many elements; yet always an energy of attack and seduction, to assail and overthrow, one after the other, curtain-walls and ramparts, barricades and lunettes, all the intricate system of fortifications which woman erects against man to defend herself; or rather, to let herself be defeated slowly and chastely.

To woman, on the other hand, nature has assigned a task much more difficult and cruel. She must repudiate what she desires; she must struggle against the voluptuousness which invades her, repel him whom she loves, exact sacrifices when she would ask only for kisses, be avaricious when everything urges her to be generous. She must collect all her meager strength to defend a gate vigorously attacked, and cry out

aloud, "Wait!" to him whom she would like to press sweetly to her bosom.

The battles of desire and coquetry, of ardor and modesty, impatience and reticence are fought in the various countries and in the various epochs with widely different strategy and tactics, but all may be reduced to this general formula. Even when the sweet chain of sympathy prepares a sure love for two lovers, the one says, "Immediately," and the other answers, "Later." When the sexes exchange their strategy and tactics, and invert their amorous missions, there invariably arises a violent disorder, and virtue and esthetics are submerged in the same shipwreck.

In Paraguay, where laxity of customs prevails, a most impatient young man, who had reasons to believe himself loved, would repeat in every key, from the most tender to the most impassioned, with sobbing voice and tyrannical accent, this one word: "Today!" And the beautiful Creole, who knew nothing of Darwin and sexual selection, would reply smilingly: "But why today? You have known me for ten days only; in two months, perhaps." In this artless reply that Paraguayan girl was evolving the philosophy of seduction and coquetry, the fundamental lines of the physiology of the sexes.

Every day the most beautiful half of the human race throws in our faces the rude accusation that we are much less exacting in our tastes, and that, satisfied with the external forms, we rarely seek to determine the substance. And it is natural that it should happen this way; the different missions assigned to each of the two sexes in the amorous strategy require that this should be done. If certain contours exercise so great and immediate a sway over us, it is because we seek in them, unwittingly and involuntarily, the good mother and the good nurse; and, more than it seems, voluptuousness prepares the future generations for the good and the better. To fructify a human female, who shall become a good mother and a good nurse, the flash of a desire and the instantaneous ardor of a battle will suffice; but woman does not seek a fecundator only; she wants her com-

panion to be the defender of her future children, the protector of her weakness; she wants to assure herself as to the deep energy of the passion of him who says he loves her; she wants to sound the abysses of heart and mind. The man shall build the nest: is he an architect? He shall defend it from rapacious animals: is he courageous? He shall train and enrich his children: has he talent, ambition, tenacity of purpose? He must know all this. For some time she has been aware that she is young and beautiful; many a time the ardent rays of a thousand desires have showered upon her; at her command numerous adorers would fall at her feet, all young, perhaps, handsome and robust; but she does not want a man; she wants the man who will be lastingly, powerfully and ardently hers. This is how, in the initial web of love, we read the inexorable laws which govern it; how clearly nature explains to us the inevitable fickleness of human males, their polygamic wanderings and their unreasonable requirements; just as modesty, chastity and the sublime reticence of woman are the faithful guardians of the destinies of the future family. Much of this elementary strategy was lost in the stormy vicissitudes of modern civilization; it is necessary to scrape off much varnish and snatch away many rags in order to touch the robust members of the primitive passions; nevertheless, through multiform hypocrisy, we succeed in finding the kernel of the thing.

Even in the rarer and more fortunate cases of two lovers suddenly and simultaneously struck by a sympathy equally warm and energetic, it is necessary that man and woman should court each other for a longer or shorter period of time. They should show to each other, in a hundred ways, their physical, moral and intellectual beauties. After having been rapidly conquered through their glances, they must reconquer each other every day, every hour, with the seductions of the heart, grace and talent. It is necessary that the great god should receive the homage of all our beauties, all our virtues, all our perfections. From morning till night, we go on gleaning from the fields, picking from gardens and orchards and roaming through forests and over mountains,

in order to carry to the altar of our idol every leaf, every flower, and every fruit which our hands can snatch away from fruitful nature. Sublime contest of homages and tributes, sublime profusion of riches and forces! The woman, also, who feels sure of being already loved brings to the altar a fresh sheaf of corn ears, a fresh bouquet of flowers, and exultantly exclaims: "This, too, is yours!" And man, although not doubting that he is the god of his companion, approaches every moment the door of the temple, he also carrying a new fruit, a new treasure, and always repeats: "This, too, is yours!"

These reciprocal seductions especially succeed where dissimilarities are deeper between the two lovers, whether proceeding from different sympathy, age, beauty, or from any other difference of some importance between the two that must unite to make one individual. It is then necessary that the increased energies of the one should conquer by degrees the treasures of the other, so that the differences may vanish or diminish and an equilibrium be brought about without which perfect love is impossible. One hundred volumes would not suffice to describe the craftinesses with which man conquers a woman's love, to enumerate the hundred thousand arts with which woman warms tepid sympathies or carries to delirium a great passion. In many cases the intriguant holds off a step further every day "the aim of his warm desires," and while the avid and ardent hand is on the point of picking the fruit, this is withdrawn by an invisible and cruel hand. "Higher, higher, still higher," the young girl seems to say to the puppy which jumps to catch the cracker from her rosy hands; and "Higher, still higher," cry and should cry the women of the entire world to the man who sighs and asks for their love.

Longer, more persistent, more fiery is the battle between desire and conquest, and richer is the trophy of victory. The daughters of Eve never regret the time lost in the first fights of love; not only do long wars prepare the most splendid victories, but the first struggles are of themselves, and for themselves alone, a better part of love's paradise, and a long

string of easy conquests is not worth one fierce and bloody battle of enticements. If, however, O daughters of Eve, you have the brilliant but dangerous mission of defending yourselves from a compact phalanx of adorers, you must redouble your arts of strategy and tactics. If you are really powerful, victory cannot fail you, and you will choose the best among the best. Train your impatience and kill the weak with time. The first to withdraw are the pallid loves and the desires of libertinism. True and deep passions ignore impatience and weariness, and, fighting every day, and every day advancing, they leave the disputed field strewn with corpses; and when you, tired in turn, proffer your hand to those who have long waited and long struggled, you may rest assured that you are among the blest.

Physiological seduction, or conquest of love by nature's law, is called by the English-speaking people *courtship,* and Darwin, by using this word in a much broader sense and for all animals, has impressed upon it the precious and wholly scientific mark. *Coquetry* is only a form of this art of seduction and conquest, and belongs already to the field of pathology. Much more frequent in woman, it is also seen in man; and it is so deeply rooted in some natures that it springs up before puberty and disappears only with death. Self-esteem, however, plays in it a part so great that its history belongs rather to the domain of pride than of love. Physiological seduction is a necessity; coquetry is a vice; the need of pleasing is one of the most fundamental elements of love, one of its most useful tools; coquetry has only itself for aim. When the conquest is made, physiological seduction lowers its weapons and withdraws; coquetry, on the contrary, is immortal and every day it grows afresh with new ardor and new yearning. To satisfy it, it is necessary to awaken daily a new desire in those who have already been vanquished, and new passions in those who have not been conquered yet, no matter whether we share the passion or not. Above all, woman wishes to be loved by many; and, in the less reprehensible cases, around true love she wishes to entwine a garland of sympathies. While the heart is given to one

alone, she dispenses smiles, sighs—perhaps, also, half-chaste kisses and semi-libertine caresses—to those she does not wish to lose as adorers and whom she deems it opportune to keep in bondage, tying them to herself with the subtle but strong thread of hope. In the gravest cases the heart cannot be given to any one, because it has been promised to all, and the huge task of pleasing many wearies the sentiment and breaks the vertebræ of character in such a way as to make impossible the development of any sincere and ardent affection. The most indefatigable coquettes and the most worn-out flirts never love; and if, in questions of love, not falling means to be virtuous, then coquetry can be said to be most pure and most holy. Every day the moral sense rebels at seeing many women selling smiles and desires every hour and, posing as Lucretias, impunely playing with lasciviousness which they do not feel, and with love which does not burn them, while they hurl anathemas at the woman who may, perhaps, have fallen but once, torn, as it were, by a true and strong passion, guilty of no other wrong than believing mendacity and treachery impossible. The virtue of the coquette is like that of the asbestos, which resists the fire by its fire-proof nature; it is a virtue entirely physical, anatomical, and he who values it does not possess a shadow of moral sense, nor has he even read a page of the physiology of the human heart.

Readers, if you have the misfortune of loving a coquettish woman, never forget that coquetry belongs to the history of the lust of sentiment; and if you thirst for love, go and seek it elsewhere, for you have taken the wrong road to it. Where you are, do seek play and folly, pyrotechnics, acrobatism, the tintinnabulation of the fool's bells, the laughter of the masquerader; but do not seek ardent voluptuousness, or the sublime palpitations of an affection which never was the companion of coquetry.

True love, which does not seek voluptuousness only, but the full, absolute, complete possession of all the beloved, cannot bring into play the subtle arts of the diplomacy of coquetry, because it cannot have the patience to study them,

or the calmness to learn them. It is a genius that knows not how to adapt itself to the domestic cares of the home life; a general who knows how to win battles, but does not waste any attention on the buttons of the uniforms and on barrack regulations. Love shines, thunders, weeps, fulminates, threatens and prays; overthrown, it overthrows; wounded, it kills. It curses and blesses, but is wrong in one thing only: it does not know the game of chess. Coquetry, on the contrary, is the most famous chess-player ever known.

Natural seduction is the art of making all our values well appreciated by presenting them with the best possible appearance. To please, we better ourselves as much as we can, and, made beautiful by nature and art, knock at the door through which affections enter. Man, who is the stronger of the two who love, and from strength derives his most irresistible seductions, after having tossed his leonine hair throws himself habitually at the feet of the woman and begs an alms of love. And woman, who is the weaker of the two, loves to disarrange with her gentle hands the mane of the king of animals, to tease him and to enjoy the superhuman voluptuousness of placing her foot on strength, to feel it quiver underneath and be able to say: "It is mine!" This is one of the most general forms of the reciprocal seduction of the sexes; and when man, on his knees and, perhaps, weeping, pleads for love, he obeys one of the most inexorable laws of nature and does not appear a coward, nor does he debase himself. Before throwing himself down in the dust, he must have shown flashes and thunder. "Lion for all, lamb for myself!"—such is the man who claims a woman; she wants only to be the Franklin of the human lightning and to attract it to herself and conduct it along the most subtle wires of her nervous organism. And when grace has conquered strength the daughter of Eve feels complete; and when the man feels the rough skin of his herculean nature caressed by the soft contact of a woman's body, he also feels as though redoubled; and both, in the fullness of bliss, feel changed into that perfect being which is the sum of a man and a woman.

When a difficult problem belonging to the moral world

presents itself to us, the only way to resolve it is that of simplifying it by leading it again to the broad highway of physiology. To read and re-read the great book of nature, trying to follow blindly its laws in the human world: there is art. This is manifest at every step in our studies on the sentiment of love. Which are the elements that make a woman seductive above all others? Beauty, grace, affection. Which are the virtues that make a man fascinating above all others? Strength, courage, talent. There is seduction, there is sympathy, which seem the most foolish and the most mysterious things in the world, taken back to the virgin source of the physiology of the sexes; there is an opening through which we see much of the light of future progress. Man must make himself more manly than ever in order to seduce and conquer the love of the daughters of Eve; and woman must always make herself more womanly in order to please the sons of Adam. And both must refine and elevate the type of their respective sexes, higher and higher, to the greatest sublimity which human hands and poet's wings may attain. Woman may dress, if she likes, with all the allurements of art; she may adorn her hair with the fragrant flowers of sentiment, assume all the classic graces and consume us with the fire of all her physical and moral seductions; but, at the bottom, there should ever remain a female, and under the wings of an angel and a cherub there should always be an Eve. And man may torture his ambition in order to bend it under the heel of love, and spur his talent so that it may throw its treasures at the feet of his idol; he may be a hero or a martyr, Spartacus or Cæsar, a tamed lion or a roaring lion; but in his loves let him always be as manly as ever, so that woman, after having stripped her hero, may always find an Adam. Seduction is never baseness, never violence, never treachery, never tyranny, when it is inspired by a true and great love, when it is the alliance of all our forces guided by the most legitimate, the most powerful, the most ardent of our desires, that of loving and being loved. Without love, seduction is a rape of voluptuousness, or a bargain in mordant vanities; it is either a crime or a vice.

CHAPTER IV

MODESTY

Modesty is one of the psychical phenomena the physiological study of which is more difficult because that phenomenon is very indistinct and vague, although prepotent and most exacting in some of its forms; because it is very variable in the different races; and because, though a part of the energies which develop in the reciprocal approaching of the sexes, it seems to keep them apart, and, born of love, seems to have a tendency to frustrate its supreme end.

I, too,—I must admit it,—through the various periods of life, have changed the idea I first had of modesty. At first it seemed to me a sentiment that rises within us in childhood and during adolescence, as spontaneous as egotism, self-esteem and love; but, later, I became convinced that modesty is taught first and learned afterward; therefore, it is one of those sentiments which I term *acquired* or *secondary*.

Modesty is an *extra-current* of love, and has its principal source in those powerful energies which, through a battle or a choice, must relight the torch of life. Animals demonstrate to us some rudimentary forms originating from modesty. Many of them conceal themselves when offering a sacrifice to voluptuousness; very many females, sought by the male, begin by fleeing, resisting, hiding that which they desire to concede. And this is probably an irreflective, automatic act; it is, perhaps, a form of fear which rises before the aggressive demands of the male; but the aim of these resistances, of these pretenses of modesty is to excite the male as much as the female and to make the ground better fitted for fecundation. It is possible that animals conceal

their loves from our sight to protect themselves from danger, knowing that in those supreme moments they are exposed to every attack; but until the psychology of brutes is so limited we will be allowed to assume that among them also the first light of modesty has penetrated. If this be so, then we will find justification in the fact that, in superior animals also, this sentiment appears first in the female, for whom the anatomy of the organs and the defensive mission in the battles of love make the actions of modesty more spontaneous and natural. And to the human female, too, nature has assigned the same mission, making her characteristically a hundred times more modest than the male.

The first hand brought by woman to cover parts which the male wished to see gave origin to the first energies of the sentiment of modesty, which arose, therefore, at the same time as the first forms of coquetry. Man and woman, then living together in the family or in the tribe, were naturally forced to become, independently of their greater psychical development, the most modest animals, because woman is subject to repulsive periodical infirmities and man shows other genital phenomena which, if not concealed, would attract too much attention from all and excite perturbation in males and in females. It is therefore natural that almost all, not to say all, races of the earth present some form of modesty, and that also in the human race the female should be more modest than the male, because the aggressive mission, which is reserved to him by nature, makes modesty dangerous and almost impossible, at least in the last battles.

Modesty, born in this way, is taught, together with many other things, by men to children, as the latter cannot, until they reach puberty, distinguish the special importance of copulative organs, or the aggressive mission of the male, or the thousand offensive and defensive vicissitudes of love. Modesty, however, is perhaps born spontaneously, or, to use a better expression, by heredity in the more perfect and elevated natures. Hence modesty is taught to those who, of themselves, would not know it, and we determine its limits in such a way as to circumscribe it within the purely genital

field or to widen it beyond the amorous boundaries. The Sherihat prescribes that Turkish women should cover the back of the hand, but permits them to expose the palm. The Armenian women of the population of southern India cover their mouths wherever they happen to be, even in their own homes, and when they go out they wrap themselves in a white cloth. The married women live in strict seclusion, and for many years they cannot see their male relatives, hiding their faces even from the father-in-law and the mother-in-law. And these two examples, selected from a thousand that might be quoted, should be sufficient to persuade us that accessory and conventional elements often accompany true modesty, to which, physiologically, they do not belong. We, ourselves, in our own countries, find that the boundaries of modesty are, in many places, marked by the various fashions of dress, and that they stop from the knees down or from the breast up and not according to the national mode of dress. He who mistook these conventional elements for modesty could write the great psychological heresy, that this sentiment had its origin in the custom of covering the body.

We must not confound with true modesty those other esthetic needs which compel us to conceal some repulsive actions of our animal life. The true sentiment of modesty defends from profane eyes the organs and the mysteries of love and those parts of the body that are directly or indirectly related to it. We behold almost all races conceal first the genitals, afterward the sides, the breast, the legs, the arms, then the entire trunk, and finally the head; but here modesty yields the place to the requirements of social intercourse or of jealousy.

The sentiment of modesty is among the most changeable in form and degree. Its ethnical history is written in the volume which I have dedicated to the ethnology of love. It will suffice here to point out that I divide the nations into immodest, semi-modest and modest, according to the traces of modesty and the greater or less development of this sentiment. Modesty is unlike intelligence, or the sentiment of the beautiful, or other psychical phenomena, which show an

ascending and regular progress as we gradually proceed from the lowest races to the highest; therefore, it cannot be considered alone as a dynamometer of progress. The Tehuelches of South America bathe very often, generally before dawn: but the men go into the water separately from the women; they are very modest people who never, in any case, take off their *chiripas*. And the Japanese, with a civilization a hundred times superior to that of the Tehuelches, are much inferior to them in the matter of modesty. The Malaysians are very modest, but the Greeks and the Romans were none too much so. Without leaving our own race and times, we have women who would die rather than subject themselves to an examination with the speculum, while men of great intelligence and lofty passions admit that they hardly feel a shadow of modesty.

In the higher races, however, if we neglect a few exceptions and take human groups in great masses, we may say that modesty, like all psychical phenomena of a high order, grows, refines and presents more delicate forms proportionately to the growth of the moral and intellectual importance of a people. The nations which are the most advanced in civilization and morality are also the most modest. Modesty is one of the most elect forms of the seductions and the reticences of love; an extra-current of the great fundamental phenomena of generation; a physical self-respect; one of the psychical phenomena of the highest order. Faithful companion of love, it is a sentiment which in superior natures possesses infinite mysteries, ineffable delicacies, gestures deserving a virtue prize, glances which are a paradise, words and sighs which deserve to be immortalized by the pen of an artist. He who possesses the immodest or semi-modest nature of the Fuegian or the Japanese loses more than half of the treasures of love, and is like a man who, deprived of the olfactory sense, admires the flowers of a garden.

Woman is the vestal of modesty, the queen of its most elect forms, and, when a virgin and as pure as crystal, she possesses intact the entire treasure of the most exquisite chastity. Wandering through the garden of love, she loses some

of its gems, and she loses more if her companion helps her to disperse the treasure. It very rarely happens, however, that a woman, even in the exciting and wearing races of a thousand loves, loses all the wealth of modesty with which nature has enriched her. Even in the most gay and libertine life, even in the filth of libertinism, we see with infinite wonder some diamonds flash, which the fire of lust was incapable of destroying and the mud of amorous simony could not soil. We remain astonished and moved at such a power of resistance in a sentiment that seems so fragile and delicate. And as long as a corner of sacred earth remains to woman upon which a humble flower of modesty grows, virtue is not all dead and resurrection is still possible. Bow your head before this flower, you, jeering deniers of every feminine virtue! you, insatiable tormentors of lust. Respect that clod of sacred earth; do not pluck that humble and last flower of a garden, which you so brutally have stripped of all leaves and reduced to desolation!

Modesty is never excessive when it is sincere; it is never too exacting when it rises spontaneously from the heart of a lofty nature; it is a sentiment that can inspire only noble things and prepare us for sublime joys. Modesty has such power that it can elevate ignorance and simplicity to the highest spheres and encircle with a halo the most common loves as well as the most exalted; it is possessed of such esthetic energies as to smother with flowers the most bestial roar of the most brazen man and hide with an impenetrable veil the most immodest secrets of the animal man. Without any need of cloth or garments, this sublime wizard will cover a nude body with a mantle that will make it invisible and impenetrable to lust. Guardian and priest of love, it follows it at every step and defends it from the mire and from the fire, and, causing it to direct its eyes upward, elevates and sanctifies it. Parsimonious trainer of the forces of love, it preserves them always fresh and always young; and when the first kiss causes the first virgin flower to fall from the brow of a woman, modesty brings forth new and ever virgin flowers before the steps of the two lovers. Texture that con-

ceals, glass that covers, balsam that stops every putrescence, modesty is the most powerful preserver of the affections; and, perhaps, more loves are killed by immodesty than by infidelity.

If the sentiment of modesty were not a great virtue, it would be the most faithful companion of voluptuousness, the greatest generator of exquisite joys. An ardent thirst and an inebriating cup! What joy, but what danger of satiety! Now the cup is full, foaming with lust; the lips are burning and half open to the most voluptuous kisses of the sweet liquor; but the cup is held by the hands of modesty, who with the suavest art satisfies the thirst and renews it, so that the lips eternally remain half open and thirsty, and in the chalice the liquor will last forever. Admirable prodigy of an immense wealth, which finds in itself the sources of renovation and perpetuation; stupendous spectacle of the most gigantic of forces confided to the hands of a child who guides and governs it!

We should teach modesty to our children, and above all to our little girls, as clearly as possible, and refine it, so that it may be all sincerity and delicacy, and not a conventional hypocrisy.

We may be chastely nude, and we may be cynically immodest with the body as fully covered as an onion. We teach our young girls to lower their eyes before the glance of him who seeks and desires them, and then we take them to the theater, where the ballet-dancers are more than nude from the waist down and the ladies are nude from the waist up; so that, adding together the two immodest halves of the two very different classes of women, we may easily have one woman, all nude and all immodest. We teach our daughters to conceal even the foot from the eager eyes of man, and then we trust them to the hands of the dressmaker, that she may perfect with her sartorial art the too modest curves allotted by nature, and mould in an alluring way the contours which innocent youth still left chaste and modest. True Tartufes on a reduced scale, with one hand we hide our face, while with the other we go on exploring lasciviousness. As

long as this profound hypocrisy continues to penetrate into the marrow of our modern society, modesty, too, will not be very sincere or will be able to exercise only the weakest influence toward elevating and refining our loves; nor do I know whether, with all the unchaste chastity that forms our distinction, we are entitled to class ourselves proudly among the modest nations. If it be true that hypocrisy is a homage paid to virtue, let us wait until the epoch of transition is past, and we shall then feel that we really are as virtuous as we pretend to be.

CHAPTER V

THE VIRGIN

SINCE, according to the grammar, adjectives may be either masculine or feminine, it consequently follows that man also can be virgin; but between his and woman's virginity there is an abyss which we in vain try to sound. A virgin male is a man who does not know the mysteries of the embrace; but of this innocence, or of this ignorance, he bears no trace in his body and often neither in his heart nor in his mind, since vice with its thousand subterfuges and Nature with her thousand pitfalls may have made him more impure than a courtesan, although he may boast of having never violated a vow made to a caste, to a prejudice, or to any of the many tyrannies of the will. The virgin female, on the contrary, is an entire world; she is a temple to which peoples from all parts of the world bear the tribute of their religion, their follies and their adoration; so that to write its story is to write the greater part of the ethnography of love. In this book, however, we will confine ourselves to consider the virgin, just as nature has carved her in the secrets of the maternal bosom, and as the civilization of our times sacrifices her on the altars of greed, of love, or of lust.

Nature, in creating the human virgin, has left to the torment of our meditations one of the most obscure and tremendous problems. It was not enough that sixteen long years should be required to turn a child into a woman; not enough that all moral bulwarks which keep us far from the temple of love should fall only through long and cruel battles; strategy and tactics of defense, the impenetrable veils of modesty, were deemed insufficient to push to folly the impatience of desire. All this still seemed little to avaricious

and cruel nature; and when your "yes" is answered by another "yes," when barricades and bulwarks fall, when the long coquetry of refusal is wearied and modesty blushingly withdraws to a corner to relish the delights of an anxiously hoped for defeat,—there, just there, at the doors of the sacred temple, a terrible angel with a sword of fire bars the entrance and says to you: "There is a virgin here!" The rose is near to your lips, closed, it is true, but beautiful and fragrant as the dawn of spring, all collected in the chaste involutions of its hundred small leaves; but to impress a kiss on it, you must let your lips bleed, because *the virgin is the thorn of a rose.* Profound mystery! There, at that threshold, two natures widely different, and yet so ardently enamored, have arrived through a thousand obstacles and a thousand battles: there was their rendezvous, for them to empty together the cup of voluptuousness; but there, on that very threshold, they find the angel of sorrow, and through a wound, through a torture, they must attain joy. Cruel mystery! The poor creature who shall be a mother and the nurse and vestal of the temple of the family, the woman who in the long sleepless nights of adolescence had imagined love as the most fragrant flower, as the sweetest fruit in the orchards of life, must reach the goal of her desires through pain, as though nature from the first kiss had reminded her: "Daughter of Eve, you will love and be a mother with great pain!" And happy because she belongs to one man, happy because she is possessed and does possess, she must behold in her bleeding hands the delicate petals of the first flower which she picked in the garden of voluptuousness.

And yet there, among those torn petals, warm with innocent blood, man has erected a temple where the three most formidable passions of the human heart receive adoration, and there he has accumulated as many elements of idolatry, passion, fury, virtue, as his brain could comprehend. There self-pride, love and the sense of ownership have found themselves bound together to conspire against human happiness and at the same time to prepare the most ardent voluptuousness. "Mine!—mine for the first time!—mine forever!"

Three cries, one more formidable than the other, which love, pride and the sense of ownership utter in unison, in the apotheosis of delirium and in the quivering of the flesh.

There is a unit for all the series, there is a virgin for all human things: to be the first means to be vastly different from being the second. Now, nature wished to consecrate anatomically the first kiss, the first embrace; to incarnate in a physical fact that tremendous unit which is called the first love. And civilized man, suspicious, jealous, avaricious, gives thanks to Nature for having come and borne testimony to the purity of a woman, and blesses her for having known how to bind a covenant of faith which no one can ever violate with impunity. The Longobards used to give the *morgincap* to the bride immediately after the first night of matrimony; and this famous gift, the prize of virginity, often equaled the fourth part of the husband's estate. Some shrewd spouses (adds the malicious historian) had the good sense of stipulating beforehand the conditions of a gift which they were too sure of not deserving. However, although we are not Longobards, we promise to all our young girls a *morgincap* to induce them to guard intact, until the supreme day of the official first love, the sacred will. This *morgincap* is a husband; it is the esteem, the veneration, the adoration of all. With that veil intact, you are a saint, a virgin, an angel; the goal of all desires; you may entertain the most foolish ambitions; you may become a queen tomorrow. If that flimsy veil is rent, you are young, beautiful, perhaps, as pure as you were yesterday, but you are nothing more than a human female. The temple has been violated, the idol overthrown, the priests have fled, hurling anathemas and invoking the vengeance of their god upon the head of the victim. What a tangle of mysteries and injustices! I really feel as if I were in the world of exorcism and necromancy!

The poet finds not one, but a thousand theories to explain the virgin. The thorn beside the rose, the temple guarded by the wings of an angel, the first voluptuousness consecrated by a first pain, the destinies of the lives of future

beings marked from the first kiss, all spasm and sweetness; and an infinite mystery which covers with its crepuscules one of the grandest and most beautiful scenes of the human world: such is the virgin of the poet.

And the moralist, too, finds in his theological theories a hundred reasons for the explanation of the virgin. The protection of virtue consecrated by a material defense, a kind admonition that love will lead us to a thousand sorrows, a sure guarantee of the honesty of the bride given to the bridegroom in the most solemn manner, a precious pledge of future faith, of everlasting domestic happiness,—there is the virgin of the theologian.

But the naturalist shakes his head and rejects the virgin of the poet and scoffs at the virgin of the theologian. Every organ must have its function; every effect must have its cause; every "why" must be answered by a "because." The virgin is for me an inceptive angel; she is the first shadow of a future separation of two things which are still brutally coupled in us: the organs of love and the organs of a bodily function. The more the living beings elevate themselves, the more they subdivide their labors; and in a creature higher than we, love will certainly have a determined and reserved ground. From the "cloaca maxima" we have arrived at two smaller ones; a step further, and we shall have three organs and three apparatus; one of the greatest physical disgraces of our body will be eliminated.

A virgin is a creature who does a great deal more of good than evil, and very few among the men, if asked to vote for or against her, would blackball her. I do not know whether all women would vote with us, but I believe that the best, the most virtuous, the most beautiful, the most poetical of them would side with us. Open temples are always less sacred than closed ones, and a mystery and a *sanctum sanctorum* help to elevate and revive idolatry. And is not love the greatest of idolatries?

A virgin is ours a thousand times more than any other woman; she must love us much, or at least she must desire an embrace much, to descend from the pedestal of the idol

and come to us; to descend from the altar and tread the vulgar ground of earthly life. And the mystery of the unknown, and the fascination of primitiæ, and of being the first teacher of the art of love, centuplicate for us the sweet joys of a first embrace. Even the dreadful trepidation of finding the temple violated holds us suspended over the abysses of desperation and voluptuousness, of which, at very short intervals, we sound the somber sorrows, the ineffable delights. And a woman, too, who knows that she is a virgin will fathom the immensity of her sacrifice, and if she has the fortune of finding it equal to the immensity of her affection she feels one of the greatest ecstasies that can vibrate simultaneously nerves and thoughts, senses and sentiments. She had already given her heart and all her affections to her god; today she gives him the seal which attests the possession of her entire self; and divides with her companion all that she has, all that she feels, all that she desires. An angel yesterday, she allows her lover to tear away her wings and becomes again a woman in order to be a wife, a friend, a mother. Priestess of a temple, she burns on the altar of love the niveous robe of the vestal and cries, sobbing with joy and sorrow: "I am thine, all thine! Is there anything more that I can give thee? Tell me and I will give it to thee. I have clipped my wings, that thou mayst carry me aloft on the wings of thy genius; I have burned my temple, that I may live only in the temple of thy heart; I have forsworn the religion of my dreams, that I may be nothing but thy companion. Do not deceive me; I was thy virgin, and I shall be only thy wife. Have an immense love, an immense sympathy for me!"

And yet, we must say it to cause some one who will read these pages to turn pale with animosity, there are men who dare accept the sacrifice of the virgin without any right to be priests of love. And there are men who bite and defile her with the slime of the viper. Miserable, a hundred times miserable wretches! Amidst tears of shame and humiliation, may the woman dream of an infinite adultery; may human dignity, insulted, avenge itself by making the man a cuckold

a thousand times; may the profaned virgin reascend to heaven, hurling anathema at the sacrilegious profaner of the temple; may the jury of entire humanity rise with the full majesty of its omnipotence and spit in the face of the enervated who has dared to ask of heaven an angel and of man a virgin, and may a horde of sneering demons scourge him, tie him to the great pillory of ridicule and, in the loudest voice, proclaim him the most dastardly, the last among men!

The anatomical fact which constitutes virginity has, however, the great inconvenience of being understood by all, so that the mass of the people, proud and happy to be able to solve a question of virtue with the eyes and with the hands, brutally throw upon the most delicate scales of the world the sword of Brennus. Let philosophers and sentimentalists prattle at will about purity of heart and the frontiers of virtue; for the common people there are but virgin women or violated women; and physics, with its resistances of elasticity, and geometry with its diameters, solve a problem over which the minds of many thinkers were hard at work. And from this point of view, a large part of civilized men are common people, and many and many who weep through tenderness of heart and soar very high, stop wondering in the presence of the brutality of a fact, acknowledge defeat and empoison their own lives, thinking that the woman whom they have chosen for their companion had already sacrificed at the altar of love.

Science openly affirms that virginity, even anatomically, has many varied forms, and may be lacking in women who never felt the breath of man. In my medical capacity, I have myself seen, with my own eyes, some little girls who were lacking that seal with which nature seems to consecrate the virgin; and as I contemplated the little creatures I was distressed by the thought that, though having kept virtuous and innocent, virtue would some day be unavailing for them in the presence of an ignorant and brutal man. In vain these poor girls will some day be as pure as an angel. And even when anatomy does not practise such an imposition upon a woman, a fall, a blow, a contortion may, in the most

innocent way, break the fragile seal which for many is the only and secure guarantee of virtue and purity. Nor is this all. Often, in early childhood, when vice and libertinism are words unknown in the dictionary of a little girl, the lascivious jest of a too precocious boy, or the posthumous lechery of a wretched old man, may violate the palladium of anatomical virginity without dimming in the slightest degree the mirror of the heart; and later, when the mysteries of love shall be unveiled, the still chaste maiden may feel pure and proud of herself and raise her head high, not knowing that she does not possess the star of physical purity. How many domestic misfortunes have happened in this way! How many first nights of love have become infernal nights, and how many ties have been dissolved by a prejudice, a suspicion, a calumny, when they should have been a garland of the purest and most sublime joys!

How many existences have been cruelly empoisoned through the elasticity of a veil more fleeting than the cloudlet that dissolves under the first rays of the sun!

And all of you, jurors of feminine honesty, who with so much assurance and brutality pass your judgment upon hearts and virginity, have you ever thought of the thousand and one aggressions which a young, beautiful and courted woman must pass through, and that, before becoming a bride, she must struggle with her own ignorance and others' lechery, with the surprises of the senses and with the cunning artifices of lust? A moment of weakness, an instant of morbid curiosity, may dim but not stain the virtue of a woman who can be, before and after, as pure as rock-crystal. No; virginity is a great thing, it is the largest diamond in the crown of youthful virtue; but it is not all the woman, it is not all the virtue.

How many wretched women were never pure except in the maternal womb, and yet with studied lasciviousness and infinite art preserved intact the physical seal of virtue, through the lechery of a hundred lovers, and, full of profound wisdom and prudent libertinage and weary of carnal lust, carried their virginity to the altar of the official first

love! Beautiful treasure, indeed! A diamond fallen a hundred times into the mud and a hundred times picked up and washed! Beautiful gem! A piece of flesh preserved pure in a prostituted body; a flower grown on a clod of earth in the midst of a fetid marsh! And men often picked that flower with sacred devotion and kissed it and adored it, perhaps after having hurled an insult at the pure and virtuous girl who lacked only a seal, like a registered letter refused by the post-office clerk because it lacked a drop of sealing-wax. How often have I wept in wrath, listening to mothers teaching their daughters this one dogma of virtue: "Preserve physical virginity!" How often have I cursed modern morals which teach the bride: "Above all, no scandal!" These, then, are the morals of this hypocritical century: "Virgin first, prudent afterward." There is the virtue of woman! An eye on the seal first, an eye to the keyhole later on: such is the perfect woman of our times!

The excessive, brutal and bestial importance given to virginity by modern society has created the infamous art of manufacturing virgins; and many times virginity has had two, five, ten different editions, not all improved, but always correct and revised, while the idiotic mass of husbands and lovers have been tricked into applauding the new virtue, the purest virtue, heaven knows how acquired!

The debasement of this hypocritical time could not be more cynically avenged. Of the virtue of a woman you have an idea utterly physical and chemical. Now, this advanced civilization is all at your service; it manufactures a chemical and physical virginity for your convenience, and calls to its aid some acrobatism, hocus-pocus and natural magic. *Mundus vult decipi, ergo decipiatur.* Curse, then, the pure and holy woman whose heart is virgin, who never has loved, but to whom the Longobards could never have awarded the prize of the *morgincap!*

Virginity exists; it exists in the physical nature of the human female, it exists in the sanctuary of civil morals, but it does not begin and end with an anatomical condition: it is also virtue. The anatomical fact must be accompanied by

the moral fact; with the purity of which the senses are the judges, we want purity of heart, the adamantine transparency of character. The human virgin, the virgin of the civilized man, is not the virgin of the savage, an oyster that can be opened only with a knife. She is a creature whom no social mud has ever soiled; she is a woman who was loved, perhaps, and desired by many, but who never belonged to any man. She knows no lasciviousness, no art of hiding vice under a shining varnish of virtue; she blushes at an impure word, at a too ardent gesture, at an impertinent pressure of the hand. The virgin knows that she is all intact, because she, too, has had longings and desires, but has never given her heart to any man; she knows that she is pure, because no profane hand has ever penetrated into the sanctuary of her purity. She has not opened any part of her robe, any fissure of her heart, any tabernacle of her treasures. She is white as the snow of the Alps, on which no foot of marten and no wing of insect have ever rested; she is pure as the water which spouts from the granite in a cave never explored by human foot; she knows everything, or is ignorant of everything, but she blushes for wisdom as well as for ignorance, if only her heart pulsates faster at the sight of a man. She is a virgin because she is modest; she is modest because she is a virgin; she is a virgin and modest because she is a woman.

And you, mothers, who were virgins, when you teach your daughters what a treasure virginal purity is, give them, together with a lesson of anatomy and physiology, which perhaps they need, a lesson of high morals. Tell them that to the man they love they should give everything; to the man they do not love, nothing; tell them that a woman can be physically a virgin and a prostitute morally; tell them that to the first kiss they owe all their treasures untouched, not one gem only, and that the future of their love will depend on the preservation of the centuple virginity enclosed in the one virgin as the masses conceive her. If nature, with a sad mystery, has prescribed that woman should love her first love with much pain, it is incumbent on us to crown the

virgin with so many flowers of virtue, to scent her with so many perfumes of grace, as to turn a martyr into a happy spouse. It is our task to elevate the physical virgin to a very high region of purity and grandeur, so that she may appear to us like an angel of Beato Angelico, all illumined by the iridescent light of the rainbow, where, amidst tears of a first defeat, should shine the light of the sun of love; and that after the hurricane of conquest there may be announced the bright calm of a day all beauty and delight. The Christian religion, in offering to man a virgin-mother to worship, wished, perhaps, to consecrate the purity of the virgin with the affections of the bride; to create an ideal of perfection in which the two chief virtues of woman should shine; to suggest, perhaps, that one can be a virgin and a mother, as another can be a virgin and a courtesan. That this ideal creature has been a sublime creation of the human mind, and not a riddle or a myth, will be clearly proved by the influence which she has exercised upon Christian art, by gazing at the Madonnas of Raphael, of Murillo and of Correggio.

CHAPTER VI

CONQUEST AND VOLUPTUOUSNESS

If man elevates his loves to the highest spheres of the ideal; if he can be called the most sublime lover on the terrestrial planet, he can boast of having had from nature the largest cup at the banquet of voluptuousness; he can also boast of being able, alone among the living creatures, to die of pleasure and to end his life with lasciviousness. Certainly, a tremendous thing is the embrace of a man and a woman who love each other! So tremendous that, before this hurricane of the senses, the painter lets the brush fall from his hand, the physiologist loses the thread of analysis, and the philosopher is bewildered by the ferocious grandeur and the brutish sublimity of that act, in which every human force seems to be offered as a holocaust to animal fecundation. The avowed or secret aim of every love, the dream of every virgin and rage of every lust, the torment and delight of every man, voluptuousness is the greatest pleasure of the senses; but it is also the deepest abyss into which vulgar loves fall at every step, and where the great ones too are submerged. Voluptuousness! Tremendous word that recalls the most ardent scene of life and the greatest chaos, which concentrates wherever an organism is born or destroyed; formless chaos, from which flashes radiate and where elements quiver and earthquakes rumble and thunder; chaos in which good and evil are so near as to mingle, confuse and melt together; chaos in which angel and brute join in close embrace, and human individuality vanishes for a moment to give way to a fantastic monster, half man and half woman, half god and half demon; chaos from which a man is born,

just as from another chaos arose the cry that generated light. I open the book of human deeds and read:

"In Sardinia the San Luri belle killed with her exuberance of carnality the young King Martin II. of Sicily, of the House of Aragon, him who gave the last blow to the independence of Sardinia, subjecting to his dynasty that part of the island which was still free. In 1409 he had gained a splendid victory over Brancaleone Doria and the Viscount of Narbonne, when he himself was defeated in turn by the belle of San Luri, who, modern Judith, killed the Aragonese king with the fury of her kisses." ("La Marmora, Itinerario in Sardegna," etc., p. 270.)

"The Empress Theodora was the source of such exquisite delight that it was said that painting and poetry were incapable of delineating the matchless excellence of her form. The satirical historian has not blushed to describe the naked scenes which Theodora was not ashamed to exhibit in the theatre. After the mention of a narrow girdle, which she wore, as none could appear stark naked in the theatre, Procopius adds: *ἀναπεπτωκυία*. After exhausting the arts of sensual pleasure, she most ungratefully murmured against the parsimony of nature, wishing a *fourth altar,* on which she might pour libations to the god of love. After having been possessed by everybody, she seduced Justinian, who made her his wife and called her *a gift of the Deity.*" (Gibbon, "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.")

"The old age of David was warmed by the young Shunammite, and Hermippus lived to be one hundred and five years old, sustained by the spirit of many young women." (Bible.)

These few examples will be sufficient to delineate in a general way the frontiers within which human voluptuousness struggles, an insatiable author of so much good and so

much evil. And yet, in the eyes of science it is nothing but "the most powerful of chemical affinities comprehended by the most perfect of living brains." Prepared in the slow laboratory of a man and a woman, the gemmulæ of life intensely seek each other and are reciprocally attracted; and when love gathers them by millions and millions, they kiss and join and, quivering, restore one of the most prodigious equilibriums of nature and generate a man.

If it is true that at every second a leaf detaches itself and falls from the human tree, it is most true that in the same unit of time ten existences at least are fused in order to relight the torch of life; and if all the gigantic forces which are condensed in those aggregations could be summed up, they would certainly be sufficient to send the world through infinite space without the aid of the laws of Newton. In the hut of the savage and in the gilded halls of the prince, on the soft cushions of new-mown hay and on the glaciers of the Sorata; on the swift train and on two camels crossing the desert, within the damp walls of the prison and in the deep mines where the rays of the sun never penetrate, in the forest and on the sands of the sea-shore, wherever a man and a woman find themselves near and can desire each other, voluptuousness wreathes its garlands and says to the man and the woman: "Be gods for an instant!"

There is no love without voluptuousness, but voluptuousness alone is not love, as that is not love which is ridiculously termed platonic. Lust and platonic love are maladies or monsters of love and are possible, nay, even too prevalent, like the deaf-mutes, the lame, the deformed, the giants and the dwarfs.

There is no conquest without possession of the thing conquered, just as there can be no love without voluptuousness. Take the flower from the tree, the fruit from the flower, and you will have a faithful image of all those amorous reticences which hypocritically stop at the threshold of the temple and, incapable alike of chastity and courage, of vice and virtue, drag a wretched existence in the limbo of bastardly affections. Often duty must be stronger than love,

and, the principles of honesty forbidding, love must be conquered with a cruel and incredible torture; but it is better to be heroes of duty than brigands acquitted for lack of proofs, often despised, despicable always. If you truly love, if you can love, then love in the name of the most powerful of the gods of Olympus, love in the name of nature, in the name of the most sacred of rights. Leave aside all amorous casuistry, the worst of human hypocrisies; leave aside the hope of winning with your reticences and your compromises with conscience the Goliath of the sentiments. How many have I beheld, after long sentimental tirades on platonic love, and after bitter tears and vows of virtue, sink from hypocrisy into hypocrisy and down to lasciviousness! How many guilty lovers did not wish sin and had vice, did not wish guilt and had prostitution! All or nothing: such is love's command. Break down the tree that you cannot cultivate, be everything to somebody; demand to be everything to your companion; do not try to divide the indivisible; do not attempt to overthrow the omnipotent, to win over the invincible. With love you cannot jest; any compromise is impossible.

Voluptuousness, even in its purest and simplest forms, without love is always lasciviousness; it is immoral even when it seems hygienic. With love, even lust is virtue; and the studied casuistry of theologians is more immodest than the most ardent kiss ever exchanged between two lovers educated by a long experience of embraces. Voluptuousness is as penetrating as light, as inexhaustible as the sun, and, enclosed between two infinities, one of desire and the other of languor, it will never be all known by the human family, were it to live for millions of centuries. All forms of the beautiful are conquered by the blandishments of art; all forms of virtue are the delight of the sentiment of the good; every great and true idea is the joy of our thought; but voluptuousness relishes simultaneously all the joys of the senses, of sentiment and of intellect, calms all morbosities, extinguishes all fires, intoxicates itself with all inebriations, high and low, with all languors, all human flashes. Volup-

tuousness is a light which gilds every object it strikes and encircles it with a halo of celestial iridescence. Nor is the embrace of love alone voluptuous; for voluptuousness is in every contact of quivering robes, of glossy hair; voluptuousness is in every quiver of the skin, in every shock of the nerves, in every kiss of the flesh. Unfortunate he who has tasted voluptuousness only out of the one cup of Venus! Let him take lessons of woman, wisest teacher of every exquisite and sublime sensuality. A Bœotian in art, let him go to Athens and study the beautiful. There is no worse enemy of voluptuousness than lust, no sister more faithful than chastity. If the poet, the painter, the sculptor could conceive this divine group, "the joy of Love guided by the hand of Chastity," that representation, whether due to pen, brush or chisel, would be as holy a thing as an altar, a lesson in virtue and a great work of art; fire enclosed in alabaster, the sun abducted by the wave, enamored and jealous; Hercules led by a child!

Lovers who love and possess each other, lovers whom voluptuousness inebriates every hour, if you still have an instant to devote to prudence, remember that voluptuousness should not be the bread but the wine of love; that if you wish that your lips be eternally thirsty, your voluptuousness must be chaste and modest; you must swim, but not drown; you must quiver, but not fall into convulsions; you must be in the grasp of death, but not dead. Modest voluptuousness, this priceless treasure, was given by nature to woman, that she may restore it to you with unbounded joys; and you should respect it as a palladium of domestic happiness and nurture it in your daughters, because verily I say unto you that in modern society there is often more pudicity in the lowest of courtesans than in some married women whose nuptial education has been imparted by an aged and libertine husband.

CHAPTER VII

HOW LOVE IS PRESERVED AND HOW IT DIES

The man who, through fault of the trees he sprang from or through his own, lives on the bestial frontiers of the human kingdom, is like the brute for which love is a desire that rises, is satisfied and falls asleep. If his affection for woman is not a passion of spring or autumn, it is always an erotic and intermittent love which dies every time a need is satisfied and revives with every renewed desire. The stimulus of the flesh announces in him the dawning of sentiment, and the obesity of the flesh puts an end to the passion of love. The new desire may have the same person or another as its object: this is for him a secondary and merely accidental question, and, according to the manner in which circumstances force him to solve it, he will be a monogamist or a polygamist, a virtuous man through habit or a libertine through caprice. Oftener than it seems this is the way in which many dark-skinned nations love, as well as many white-skinned men, who nevertheless believe that they faithfully love one woman at a time. The history of their love is a necklace of Venetian beads, to which a new bead is added for every desire satisfied; and if the hues of the glass corpuscles are not too diverse, one may have before his eyes a pretty ornament that may spangle the neck of a decent virtue and an honest passion. Between the desire that dies and another that is born, you can set a gentle remembrance of gratitude for the pleasure enjoyed, a sweet hope of a greater joy for the future; and the garland of your passion will then acquire greater beauty and new flowers and perhaps stimulate a true and great love. The most sublime heights of sentiment, the summits of thought, are reached by few; while hundreds and

hundreds of lowly sheep ruminate on the plains, where thousands and thousands of bees are buzzing, and millions and millions of ants are swarming. Upon the sapphire summits of the Alps two lone eagles represent the world of the living.

Love, although a most powerful affection, always follows the laws of elementary physics, which govern all the energies accumulated in our nervous centers and which we call sentiments. As long as passion remains in a condition of desire, that is to say, as long as force is potential and is not turned into a product, energy lasts and sentiment lives, vigorous and ardent. All the art of preserving love is, therefore, reduced to this alone: to preserve desire and to cause it to spring up again almost immediately after it is spent. And as even love, with all its omnipotence, cannot evade the physical laws, and every spark that springs forth must always be followed by a period of repose, it is indispensable to act in such a way that while a part of the force is transformed into labor, another be accumulated, preparing a new spark in such a short time that it should be nearly impossible to perceive any interval between the two sparks. To transform the intermittent electric current into a continuous one constitutes the great secret of protracting the existence of love.

As long as desire is not satisfied, and the struggle has not become a conquest, love is not only preserved but increased; and not in vain does woman provide for her happiness in asking for time and prolonging the battle. A love must be either very weak or very brutal if it withdraws from the struggle before victory; and as it happens very seldom that a woman yields everything at once, the small and great favors which from time to time she concedes to the conqueror mark a continual renewal of ever ardent desires and a continuous revivification of love. Finally, sooner or later, the day of the wished-for victory arrives, and one embrace makes two lives one, melts in a single crucible two volcanic rocks and two feelings of voluptuousness. However, even when love is so base as to be only a thirst for pleasure, it seldom dies with the first embrace. And who can say that he has possessed a woman entirely in one night of love?

Human charms are such and so many, and our esthetic needs so exquisite and ardent, that even the acquisition of voluptuousness alone is, fortunately, very slow, and in the sweet occupation of new provinces love is preserved or revivified. The various treasures of beauty and sensuality of two lovers, the art of loving, so neglected even after Ovidius' times, mark the limit of duration of those loves that derive their energies only from the worship of form or from the ardor of voluptuousness; and if in some cases that duration is long-lasting, it never is infinite. The hour comes when, alas! the wing of time smites the fresh cheeks of youth, and the northern winds wrinkle them, and the storm scatters over the ground the rosy petals of human beauty; the hour comes when the cup of lust no longer contains a drop of nectar, and then, if nothing is left, love is dying, and no miracle in the world can save it from a certain death. The energy of passion had its only source in voluptuousness and beauty; one has vanished, the other one is withered and the strength is spent. No force in the world is produced without the transmutation of matter; no energy is increased without transformations of equilibrium and decompositions of affinities. If man and woman do not revive an affinity of sympathy, no combination can take place; no light, no heat can spring forth from their contact. Let them sing the psalms of death and together bury the remains of a love which, kept alive by voluptuousness alone, was inexorably to perish with it.

This is the most general way in which vulgar loves die, and the duration of their life can be calculated with fair precision by weighing the beauty of the two lovers, their youth, their lust, their art of loving. Those loves may last an hour, a day, a month, a year, ten years; they may, in rare cases, last for the entire period of human youth. Men, and especially women, do not fall without a struggle under the blows of time, and with incredible art repair the ravages of age; and not only are forms daily adulterated, denatured and counterfeited, but into the cup of love, as well, spices and drugs and philters are poured, that the silent hunger

may receive the stimulus of an artificial appetite, and soft blandishments and morbid temptations of the flesh substitute the ardor and impetus of passion. Long lasts the battle before defeat is acknowledged and love changes its nature but still lives. It was a volcano, it is now a Bengal light; it was as nude and chaste as an Uranian Venus, it is now as clothed and immodest as a courtesan; it was love of every hour, it is now periodical, intermittent, like the tertian or the quartan; it impunely defied the rays of the sun at midday, it now prefers the twilight; but, when all is said, in spite of so much reticence and so much tinkering, it is still and always love. Women, you who behold with horror the gradual extinction of that fire which for so many years has warmed your enamored members, if you were happy through beauty alone, remember that that fire will be extinguished with the withering of the last attraction of your body; and when the heartrending cry which invokes the stimulus of a desire will not be answered, prepare for the funeral psalmody. As long as you can, with the galvanism of lust, arouse a desire in the flaccid flesh of your lover, love will not be dead. You see, then, to what a low level the art of preserving love has sunk, when love has its origin only in the desire of bodily form: it sinks to a question of hygiene; I would nearly say, it transforms itself into a problem of taxidermy and preservation by chemical process! It is necessary to study the antiseptic virtue of deliberate refusals and libertine reticence; to submit lust to a chemical research and fatigue to a physiological investigation; to meditate upon the economy of energies and visit the pharmacy for the purpose of discovering the aphrodisiacal virtues of the various silken fabrics, of the various smiles, and of the sensual movements of the body. To these basest studies we have lowered the woman who would so gladly have wished to soar aloft with us through the numberless spheres of the beautiful and not only embrace the world of exterior forms, but also the infinite worlds of sentiment and thought.

You will tell me, perhaps, that I aspire to an ideal love, impossible, therefore, to reach; you will tell me that a man

with a good constitution can be handsome for forty years of his life, and that woman, too, is entitled to thirty years of beauty and ten more years of gracefulness; so that a love which should last but these thirty or forty years would still be a most beautiful and most enviable thing. A spring and a summer of forty years, ending with a mild autumn, in which a sweet remembrance, a suave reciprocal gratitude, and an intimate friendship prepare the last twilight of old age, may seem to us a worthy triumph of a long and splendid life of love. And I am with you if you mean the common loves of the common people; but we must have a high, a very high aim, and we all should desire a love lasting as long as life and which shall be buried alone in its grave. And then every healthy man can offer to woman the thyrsus of love, and every healthy woman can offer the cup of voluptuousness to man; but how many men are handsome, how many women can be called beautiful? Perhaps not ten in a hundred; and all the others who in various degrees are removed from the type of perfection of form, shall they not love, can they not be loved? Certainly.

In man, rich in so many physical elements, the beautiful does not end with the exterior form, nor should love spring from the source of voluptuousness alone. No deformity, no disease in him who would procreate men: this is hygiene; but the hundred forms of moral and intellectual beauty, relieved only by a soft shade of sex, can and should awaken ardent and tenacious passions that do not vanish with the sun of youth. Thus, while love can dispense its delights to every man and every woman, perfect love should be born of the contemplation and adoration of every type of beauty; and when that of the form begins to fade, let moral beauty shine in all its power, and, later still, let the beauty of thought appear to us in all its brilliant majesty, so that while one star disappears, another twinkles, and from the slumbering desires of the senses we feel a stronger yearning awaken, the yearning for possessing the treasures of sentiment and thought of a creature who is all ours, and whom, if we suddenly loved her for the beauty of form, we now love and

will continue to love for her beauty of kindness, culture, ideas, and everything that a human being can boast of beauty and greatness. Even character and thought have a profoundly sexual type, and feminine kindness can be adored by us, just as virile courage is admired by the sweet and tender nature of woman. When we have loved in a woman not only the beautiful female, but a whole nature imbued with all the beauties and graces of the human Eve, the longest life will not suffice to satisfy our desires of possession, and at the last hour of extreme old age we have still some new conquest to make, and some desire is reawakened, while the accumulation of most sweet memories fills the void which youth, by fleeing, has left behind itself. Sublime triumph of human nature, in which love survives the senses exhausted, voluptuousness which is mute, the beauty of forms which is buried, while a warm ray of light shines on the silvery heads of two old beings who still love each other because they still desire each other and because heart and mind unite in an embrace, sexual by origin, but ideal for the heights attained. Our study on love in old age will complete this picture, certainly one of the most beautiful and seductive in the great museum of love: a picture which we should all desire to represent in the late years of our life.

When the sources of love are many, while one dries up another swells so that love never lacks a flow of water to quench its insatiable thirst. All passions follow in their movements a parabolic line, and those that have risen the highest descend the most rapidly; hence the weariness so close to strength; the tediousness that follows enthusiasm; the thousand dangers of the death of sentiment. More than any other passion, love presents these phenomena and dangers, and it is impossible for all to make voluptuousness, ecstasy and apotheosis last beyond a very short flash of a few instants. Intermittence is one of the most inexorable laws of the nervous system, and he who would increase enthusiasm and

"Only breathe the life of kisses and of sighs,"

dies consumed by his own fire, and, what is worse, before dying, beholds love dead at his feet. We cannot rebel against the laws of nature, nor can we subjugate them; but it is conceded to us to direct them to our advantage. And thus it is in our case. Between ecstasy and ecstasy we can sow joy and suppress tediousness; between voluptuousness and voluptuousness we can suppress weariness and pick the flowers of sentiment, and from too ardent and sensual contemplations we can repair to the cool temple of thought to meditate and remember together. This is perfect love, this is ideal love, which keeps pure, unaltered, brilliant as a diamond in the tormented sand of a river. A few reach it; many, however, can approach it, and for human happiness and human greatness it is enough to see it even from afar, like the promised land, which, as the poet says, "is always beyond the mountain."

The man who brutally opposes the holy and noble aspirations of woman for a higher participation in mental work signs his own sentence; and when he cynically sends her back to the bed or to nursing cares, he resigns himself to knowing only the coarsest and most brutish part of the joys of love. You may be the strongest male and the wisest libertine; but Venus herself, descended from the heaven of the ideal, would tire you, and for you, too, would arrive the hour of dislike; then you would curse the vanity of love and execrate life, reciting the litany of lamentations and disappointments which, from Adam down, has been repeated by all those who know not how to love and are bestially ignorant of the laws of the economy of strength. We must elevate woman more and more in order not only to fulfil an act of justice but also to enlarge the field of our joys and increase the value of our voluptuousness. A great step has been made in this direction, by transforming the *female* of the polygamous gyneceum into the mother of a family; but this new "freedman" of modern civilization is merely tolerated, not considered equal to us, like an orphan taken from the street and living with the members of a family but not forming an integral part of it. If the *concubine* has become a

mother, a great step still remains to be made in order that she may become a woman, or, to put it in a better way, become a *female-man,* a most noble and delicate creature, who shall think and feel as we do and think and feel in a *feminine way,* thus completing in us the aspect of things, of which we see only a part, and bringing to us, in the meditations and struggles of life, that precious element which only the daughter of Eve can give us. If from woman you want nothing but the joys of love, then sow sentiments and ideas in her. She is like the bee that changes sugar and nectar and the fluid of every flower into honey: make her wise, and wisdom will be transformed into caresses; make her strong, and she will use her strength to enrich you; make her great, and she will place her greatness at your feet for a kiss. Fear not; she will never place her foot upon the neck of man, because she loves him too much, and because, to become a tyrant, she would be compelled to amputate the better part of herself, abdicating her omnipotence.

Where man and woman are bound together by the three natures of sense, sentiment and thought, love is easily preserved by its own nature and without any need of artifice. Some fortunate individuals ask with astonishment why their love should ever cease; and love lives in them, warm, tenacious, invincible, and only with death is extinguished, instantaneously, like the porcelain bowl, very old but always new, which falls from the hands of the inexperienced servant and perishes as it was created, beautiful and brilliant.

It is not so when voluptuousness is all, or nearly all, of love; then the easiest way to preserve it is to keep always some drops of desire in the cup of love, so that, between embrace and embrace, voluptuousness is never quite extinguished, giving a deeply sexual character to the common relations of habits, conversations and family intercourses. This is an indirect but sure advantage, ever produced by chastity between two creatures that love each other without having the fortune to participate in any treasures beyond those of the senses. It is opportune to remember that every virtue is the fruitful mother of other virtues.

The preservation of love is one of the most sacred rights or duties incumbent upon woman, although we cannot refuse with impunity to take an active part in this mission. We, however, are too light-minded, too polygamous, too exacting in our sudden desires to find prudence and economy of love easy virtues for us. To see all, to touch all, to want all and at once: such is the childish appearance of many virile loves. Woman loves more than we, but she foresees, presurmises, fears. In love, too, she is a good provider, and, while she picks the flower for the joy of today, knows how to preserve the fruit for the dreary winter. Woe to her, if she joins in the thoughtlessness of her prodigal companion! They will make together a splendid bonfire of their affections, of their voluptuousness, renewing, alas! too soon, the thousandth edition of the story of the grasshopper and the ant.

If the women who will read my book should learn nothing but this one thing, I would believe that they have had a just compensation for the tediousness which they may have experienced; and I shall be happy for not having written in vain to promote the welfare of the dearer part of the human family. With the right given to me by a long and troublesome experience, by a deep, untired study of the human heart, I pray and entreat and conjure them to close with their white little hands and their rosy lips the lips of the man who too ardently begs their love. Let them say "no" and "no" again, and bury the "yes" of the friend under a shower of flowers, reserving the desire for other supplications and other battles. Every sacrifice will be compensated a hundredfold, and for a caress denied today, they will receive ten tomorrow. Woman is an old teacher of sacrifice, and let her use this practical wisdom in preserving love, which is the air she breathes, the blood which gives life to her, love which is her dearest treasure. Never should she say "yes" before having said "no" at least once; if she truly loves the prodigal friend, she should save for the days of famine the crumbs which now fall from his hands and which today he despises; let her be the stewardess of love

as she already is that of the household; let man fecundate and woman preserve; let him conquer and let her keep the booty.

If genital chastity is the virtue which, better than any other, preserves vulgar loves, a certain chastity of sentiment and thought, a certain reserve of manner and forms are also indispensable if sublime loves are to last. The man must never see his wife nude, nor should the woman ever behold her companion nude before her; veils and mists, leaves and flowers must shade the man and woman in sense, sentiment and intellect. The infinite is the only thing that man never tires of loving, contemplating, studying, just because it is neither weighed nor measured. And so it is in love: the beautiful, the true, the good of the creature whom we love must be infinite, because they must not be seen, weighed or measured by us. A sun that passes from the crepuscule of the morning to the evening twilight and never entirely reveals itself: such is eternal and immutable love, that fears no frost of winter or hurricanes of summer; that dies standing like the ancient heroes.

Study the fortunate men who are not only capable of arousing, but also of preserving great passions, and you will behold in them all those exalted virtues which may be grouped under the name of *crepuscular politics*. A beauty that has more grace than splendor, more seduction than heat; a flexibility that retains strength; an authority that can be made to smile, and a nature that is smiling rather than laughing; a deep and tender kindness, and a genius that has more spirit than grandeur: such are the great preservative powers of love. Grace more than beauty preserves love, because it has more crepuscular hues; sympathetic natures more than beautiful ones preserve love, kind natures more than grand ones, wit more than genius. There are men and women who at first sight do not make any great impression, but on every hair of their head they seem to have a hook and in every pore of the skin a leech, so that no sooner have you come into intimate contact with them than you find your-

self seized by a thousand grapnels and absorbed by a thousand cupping-glasses, as though a gigantic polyp had seized you in the absorbing coils of its manifold tentacles.

Love is dead without possibility of resurrection when, unlike all living things, there is no galvanism to awaken the slumbering nerves, no wave of blood to rouse the heart. But love also has swoons and syncopes and, like the rotifer, may die provisorily and desiccate, awaiting a beneficial rain to restore it to life. Whoever denies this virtue in love, then believes that love is baser than the rotifer and has never known the most elementary physiology of life and affection. There is for love, as for any other organism, a real death and an apparent one; the former is inexorable, the latter curable, like any other malady, by having recourse to skill and knowledge.

How often has a love apparently dead resuscitated as live as ever, probably more alive than before; and this, heralded as a miracle, is one of the usual mysteries of the heart, for life was not extinguished, but only latent, as no dead, really and truly dead, with the exception of Lazarus, has ever been seen to rise again. A nerve was still sensitive, a desire could still be resuscitated, and the apparently dead comes to life again. Physicians remark that apparent death is much more frequent in cases of hysteria, catalepsy and in all forms of neurosis; it is then natural that many loves, alive but believed to be dead, have been interred through a most cruel mistake, since an organism more nervous, more cataleptic and more hysterical than love is difficult to find in the entire world of the living. In our case, however, the burial is less dangerous, because love itself opens every coffin, every grave, overturns every clod and appears to you saying: "Do not weep; here I am!"

Very rarely does love die a violent death, and cases called by that name are wounds, ruptures, syncopes and nothing more. Real death occurs through senility and after long illness. Duty frequently commands not to love him or her who suddenly has seemed base and infamous to us; but love, sentenced to death, weeps, despairs, but does not want to

die. Sent back to prison, without light, without food, it defies hunger, darkness, cold, but does not die. The public, perhaps, believes that it has disappeared from the face of the earth, as has happened with illustrious prisoners plunged into the stillness of a castle; but love lives in those depths and groans, convulsed by a prolonged agony, until at last, with him who feels it, it dies a merciful death.

If the appearance of a new creature on the path of life seems to kill love violently, it is because it was not true love; and if it really were such, the battle will be relentless and long, and the Prince of Affections will die, as in other cases, a lingering death. When we shall once and forever have ceased to call love that which is the desire of the flesh and the pride of possession, that sentiment will appear to us as a much more beautiful thing, greater and more honorable than is ordinarily supposed; many miracles will at last be explained as very simple physical phenomena, and many obscure mysteries will be exposed to light.

To cause love to gush forth from the rock of indifference is a fascinating prodigy; to rouse it from its slumber is a desirable power; to sow the path of our life with love and desires may be the splendid pride of every living creature; but to cherish the conquered love, to preserve it pure and bright, to bring it impunely through the cyclones of life, the fogs of November and the frost of December, to guide it, healthy and robust, from the spring of youth to the border of the grave that it may die, like the Mexican victim, amid choruses of admiration and adorned with flowers of eternal freshness, is one of the highest ambitions to which we can aspire. It is as beautiful a thing as to create a work of art; it is as useful an achievement as to become rich; it is as great a feat as to reach glory. It is said by many that the most natural way for love to die is to transform itself into friendship; but several times already I have made clear to the reader what I think of sexual friendships. Perhaps, in some very rare cases, neither of the two lovers remembers that the beloved one belongs to the other sex: but how can the loves of the entire past be forgotten? How can we suddenly

obliterate the ardent remembrances of the many years of love? If for a dead love the sweet custom of friendly visit can be substituted, if a man and a woman can forget that they are man and woman, what name will this new and singular affection deserve? Perhaps that of automatic habit; and I will send this psychical phenomenon back to the laboratory of the physiologist, that he may study it together with the unconscious and reflected motions.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEPTHS AND THE HEIGHTS OF LOVE

WHENEVER I see a flower that opens and shows its cheerful petals on the border of an abyss, the same thought ever recurs to my mind: there is love, which always seems to live between two infinities, height and depth. While its aspirations carry it aloft, while it seems to ask of heaven space and light, it projects its roots into the most intricate mazes of the rocks, into the most somber mysteries of the abyss. Star that glitters in the infinity of the ideal, root that dissolves the stones in the infinity of depth, it reaches all altitudes and all profundities, is the most human of passions and always placed among the divine passions; it is inmost in us and the most ethereal. Thought on the summit of a mountain, strength in the valley below, it guides the poet when he ascends to paradise, accompanies man when he plunges into the hot sea of sensuality; virgin and father in heaven, lover and spouse on earth. If to live means to exist in the most beautiful form of life, then love is richness, luxury, splendor of life; love is whatever is divine in human beings.

No one will ever be able to say where love penetrates when it lifts the bottom of human nature, where pearls and corals are intermixed with mud. It is a diver that brings to light strange and unknown things and reveals to the astonished eye of the observer new things never before conceived; it is the most daring and the most fortunate of excavators. How many simple natures of young girls, how many vulgar talents of men are perturbed, agitated and renovated by the contact of the new god, who seems to evoke from the abysses all silent passions, all dormant ideas, all the phantoms of

heart and thought! The deep simmering of psychical elements at the contact with love almost always announces the birth of a second moral nature and, revivifying life, marks a new era in it. Of our birth we are always ignorant, and of our death almost always unconscious; between the "to be" and the "not to be" only one third and great thing is possible—"to love." While the common people judge from the hair on the face and from the deepened voice that a boy has become a man, a tremendous profound earthquake warns him that he must love, that he already loves; and while mothers behold with affectionate trepidation the rounding of their daughters' form to womanhood, another profound earthquake warns the girl that she must love, that she already loves.

In the loving season many animals change color and shape, adorn themselves with new feathers, or arm themselves with new weapons; with the nuptial robe they assume different habits and singular abilities; mutes, they become clever singers; obtuse, they are transformed into skilled architects; granivorous, they become carnivorous; if the earth is their habitat, they become winged messengers of the skies; if caterpillars, they are metamorphosed into butterflies. So it is with man, although such transmutation hardly affects his epidermis, but sinks into the veins and the meanders of his physical nature. The phase of puberty deserves to be dealt with separately; it will suffice here to remark that every force redoubles, every vigor refines, and while, with our growing to manhood, forces and energies prepare and grow, love calls forces and energies into action. Puberty declares us in a state of war; love calls us to the battle. Defenseless if we have not reached puberty, we are armed if we have reached it; armed and combative if we have reached it and are in love.

Not all human forces are good, not all the resources of mind are beneficial to the good, and, therefore, love calls into action bad elements as well, which had not been seen before. For the first time, from the deep abysses of the moral man, specters of crime and vice, phantoms of revelry

and prison appear. In defective organisms, predestined for the prison or the madhouse, together with first love often the first crime or the first mania reveals itself. To the great summoner of profundity and sublimity every human element answers, "Present"; and the sudden anger in natures erstwhile mild, the first tears on faces till then smiling, the first poetic outburst in natures hitherto utterly prosaic, the first hysterical paroxysms in a body that seemed to have no nerves, the first ambitions in the most timid youth, the first meditations at the mirror, the first impulses, the first war declared against an invisible enemy, the first follies, the first flashes of genius, the first lies and the first heroisms, are all new specters called from the abysses by the magic wand of the sorcerer among sorcerers, by the greatest conjurer of spirits that the blessed age of wizards and exorcisms might have boasted of.

The man who loves is twice a man, because for the first time he feels not only that he is alive, but also that he has the power of creating living beings, of procreating. Nor is woman the sole generator, because in man's blood is half of a future creature, and the seed of a second existence within us doubles us and makes us almost as proud as the ancient prophets, to whom God entrusted, as to a tabernacle, the supreme truth, the prophecy of future events. A man who loves has within him a part of that which will live in the future, the fruitful germs of a new generation.

While all the psychical forces are still confused and indistinct at first contact with the new sentiment, Love will march them in procession and muster them under his orders. Every beauty must transmute itself into flowers for a garland, every passion must lend its fire, every energy must don the livery of a servant or a slave. Many to serve, one to command; many strong, but only one supremely strong; many subjects, but only one tyrant. No objection, no discussion; where love is present, who would give suggestions or counsel? O virgin and rising forces of youth, bow your head before your god; splendid beauties of human nature, lay your tributes upon the new altars. Are you not satisfied

with the glory of doing homage to love? Rarely does avarice find place in the first and deep meditations of a heart in love, but the question is continually repeated: "Have I something else, something better, to offer? Have I really given my whole self to my king?"

A most singular and heartrending voluptuousness of love is to feel that everything leaves us and that we no longer belong to ourselves. It seems as though we were witnessing a satanic phantasmagoria in which we behold limbs, organs, senses, affections, thoughts fleeing from us, running madly toward a new center, where a new organism is being moulded with our remains. Even time appears to be ours no longer, since it is no longer measured by the watch, but by the impatience of desire or the flashes of voluptuousness; thought, too, no longer belongs to us, as it is tyrannically ruled by one image alone. To find ourselves again, to remember that we have still intimate relations with the man of yesterday, we must go and seek another creature who has robbed us of everything. Hence a vague unrest which invades the body, the senses and the thoughts of every lover; hence the undertaking, most difficult even for the ablest dissembler, to conceal the new god who invades and penetrates every part of us. Every hair, every pore, every nerve, every part of the epidermis of the man who loves sings and says to the universe of the living: "I love, and who loves me?" Day and night, in the calm and in the storm, all the nature of a lover sings its note until another song responds in the same tone. Not a moment of peace, not an instant of truce, until the new energy has found a sister energy. Love is like the sea: here it is as calm as the surface of an Alpine lake, still and smooth as a sheet of lead; but there, among the rocks or upon the coast, it is eternally in motion, and, roaring or sighing, howling or caressing, agitates with incessant motion the land it kisses. Man and woman who meet and love are the sea and the land, which are perpetually at war—a war in turn sweet and bitter, tender and cruel, voluptuous and merciless.

Look at that young girl seated at the window, bending

over a piece of white linen which she is sewing. How attentive she is to her work! She seems, between one stitch and another, to be meditating on the solution of the quadrature of the circle, so absorbed is she in her arduous task. But if I only could write the volume of thoughts that pass through her brain between two stitches! She is fishing in the deep abysses of love.

And at a short distance thence, she unaware of it, a young man, too, is at the window, his hair disheveled, his hands firmly thrust into his pockets, his breast swelling as by a threat. He has been staring at the sky for the last hour. Is he meditating, perhaps, upon the tremendous problem of the proletariate or on that of human liberty? Is he, perhaps, dreaming of glory, of wealth? No; he, too, is fishing in the deep abysses of love.

Woman more than man dives deeper and soars higher in the regions of love; society generally withholds her from the field of action, and an infinite time is left to her for penetrating into the abysses of the heart. How often an innocent young girl, who, perhaps, hardly knows how to write, for many long hours feels in her imagination the sweetness of a kiss which lasted but a second; how often she is tortured during a whole night by the bitterness of a cold salute or of a rude word! Here is a deepness of sense which, nevertheless, is nothing in comparison with the queer and transubstantial process of sentimental analysis with which woman pulverizes, analyzes, distills a look, a word, a gesture. Hide, O chemists, your ignorance before the profundity of the analytical art of an enamored woman; to her the spectroscope is a coarse instrument of prehistoric science; homœopathic draughts are poisons; atoms are worlds; she has measured them many centuries before Thomson. A billionth part of a milligram of rancor diluted in an ocean of voluptuousness is detected by her process of analysis; an atom of indifference in the lava of desire is instantaneously traced by the thermo-electric apparatus which she uses in her laboratory. She is a priestess of the ideal, of the infinite, of the incommensurable, and will continue to be religious many

centuries after man will have buried the last god. Even in love, the infinite is insufficient for her.

Love always elevates the lover above the average man; and as his increased strength makes him capable of greater undertakings, the horizon widens before him more and more because he sees men and things from a greater height. Each one of us has a different capacity of soaring to the regions of the ideal; but rabble and genius, prose and poetry, always raise themselves, by the action of love, to a world which is nobler, more beautiful, more serene than that in which we drag out our daily uneventful existence. How many vulgar, despicable natures are redeemed by the action of love; how many inert intellects are guided through the paths to glory; how many of the vulgar herd reach the height of the Olympus of thoughts with the aid of a loving hand! And still the ignoble proverb is daily repeated, that science and glory must guard against love as against a bitter enemy, and the examples are pedantically quoted of great men who loved but art and to chastity alone owed their greatness. Strange disorder of ideas, in which hygiene is confused with morality, chastity with the incapacity of loving; but a man healthy in sense and sentiment will always be elevated by love, if he does not make an unworthy creature the object of his affection, if he does not confound love with lust. For one genius killed by love, you have a hundred who owe to love their greatest inspirations, who drew from it the strength to live, who blessed it as superior to glory, who in it alone found the fresh wave that tempered the burning ardor of enthusiasm and passion. It is an old habit of the human beast to trample under its feet the rind of the fruit from which it has just sucked the last drop of juice!

If love does not work in all creatures the same miracles which we expect, if it is not always a virtue that elevates and refines, it is because we have lowered woman to the level of our lasciviousness, because even we, civilized men, feel for her more desire than esteem, more lust than love. And yet woman thirsts more than man for the ideal, and, like all oppressed creatures, looks upward with more faith. Her

exquisitely sensitive nature, open to the raptures of enthusiasm, easily inflamed by the warmth of poetry, attracts her irresistibly to higher and higher altitudes, and she would have helped us also to soar if we had not made of her a sweet concubine or a good housewife. Woman feels the ideal, aspires to every sublimity, but she has neither courage nor strength to ascend; and if she is not supported by the robust arm of her lover, she will become easily prostrated and sit down to rest on the path that leads upward. To her nature has assigned the task of indicating the high aim, to us the duty of accompanying and sustaining her. In a magnificent painting by Schoeffer, Dante is standing below, Beatrice above. Dante gazes at her, contemplates her and is inspired by her; and Beatrice, her eyes turned to heaven, seems to say to him: "Upward, upward! There it is where we shall go together!" Nothing is more contagious than enthusiasm; nothing more fascinating, more irresistible than the enthusiasm of woman. Without arguments that induce one to believe, without the strength of hoping, sustained only by love, she is always full of faith in great and beautiful things, and at every step of life, now handsome by her sublime imprudence, now affecting by her youthful enthusiasm, seems to say to us: "Onward, onward!" And with her tender little hands she draws us upward, guides us and lends us her ever fresh strength, even when she would appear fatigued.

When Christ made faith the corner-stone of his religion, when he said that with faith we could move the mountains, he was inspired, perhaps, by that ardent faith which woman is possessed of and which makes her strong in her weakness. Woe to us, if before preparing for an undertaking we should be obliged to weigh with mathematical precision all favorable and unfavorable probabilities; woe to us, if we were to launch only into those enterprises of which we are sure! More than three-fourths of the great achievements would never have been performed. There is always an element which evades calculation, and it is in the capricious hands of destiny; it is the lacuna which must be filled by faith, by that faith which lifts the mountains, and which woman so deeply feels and so

tenderly infuses into our hearts. You may point at the most celebrated eunuchs of the heart, who, without the aid of woman, reached the prodigious heights of fame; but I most solemnly affirm that, had they been guided by a loving hand, they would have soared still higher. Love is a second sight, and woman sees things from a point of view which nearly always escapes the synthetic survey of man; she discovers many hidden elements of things which we, through excessive haste or excessive pride, do not see; and helping us with the light of love, she assists us in penetrating more deeply into the substance of every problem and, above all, into the knowledge of human nature. In small and great things, after having consulted science and art, experience and imagination, after having read the book of history and the book of the human heart, you should never fail to consult the woman who loves you; whether about a book, or a law, or a work of art, or commerce, or industry, or poetry, woman will always have something new to tell you, she will always have her revelations, and through the action of love you will feel elevated.

Some men of talent lack the coefficient of ambition to ascend, and you will often see them die before producing the fruit of their gigantic forces; only woman and love can give them that energy which they cannot obtain from the stimulus of self-love. Eve knows how to infuse faith into the skeptic, ambition into the disheartened, strength to all; unaspiring for herself, she is intensely ambitious, haughty, proud, if necessary, for the man she loves; and thrones and political power, civil and martial crowns, glories of art and science, were won through the ambition lent or inspired by a beloved woman. In heroic and chivalrous ages this was publicly proclaimed and boasted of; today, when women are sold in houses of prostitution or at the counter of matrimony, it has become fashionable to blush at owing one's glory to a woman, and the chivalrous element, alas! sank and perished together with many other evil things which we would not like to see come back again. Chivalrous love vanished and its place was taken by the cicisbeism of our

great-grandfathers, while today in the limbo of a new rising generation we feel that we begin to discern the germs of a more beautiful epoch for the amorous life of man.

The more ballast love throws away which keeps it near to the ground, the higher we soar in the regions of the ideal. This ballast consists all of lust and self-pride, and it is woman's duty to help us throw it out of our car. She should not assist with her lasciviousness and her vanity in further debasing man's loves, already so brutish and vulgar. In the rapture we feel when inhaling the pure air of the loftiest mountains, we may sometimes forget that night is drawing near and home is far away; and thus in love we may feel so carried away by the fascination of the ideal as to desire a love without contact, the spirit without the matter. These are sublime derangements of the brain, only too rare, but reaching the extreme limits of human possibilities; they lead to delirium, to self-sacrifice; they drag us to folly or to martyrdom. If a desire continues durable and pure upon the highest summits of human love and is not perturbed by the contact of matter, men from beneath will contemplate that statue as a fantastic monument erected by the morning clouds of the mountain. Not knowing whether it is an effect of the mist or the imagery of a dream, they contemplate and admire.

The pure and intimate communion of thought and sentiment, with nothing of the senses but two clasping hands and two pairs of eyes which blend together, is certainly a voluptuousness among the greatest of the sexual world; and without any need of platonic love, it may so happen that two creatures in that moment will forget that one of them is a man and the other a woman. Then feminine nature shines with all the halo of its celestial light; from that source of poetry, genius may draw its greatest energies. Then coarse natures undergo the influence of refinement in that pure air, social scrofula disappears and all human soil is washed off. Women, you should take advantage of those fleeting instants to regenerate the human family and urge it on to higher destinies! The influence of the ecstasy of sentiment on man

is of shorter duration than on woman, and your angel will soon fall at your feet, imploring of you the kiss of the terrestrial creature. You are omnipotent then, for you have the lion at your feet; and if man is strong, you are stronger still, since his strength is all for you. Guide it toward the good and the better; direct it to the beautiful. In that lion which roars with a subdued voice at your feet there is still much of the beast; in that conquered Hercules there is still much of the human brute. Silence the beast by running your slender fingers through his disheveled mane, summon forth from the depths holy energies, noble inspirations and a thirst for the ideal. We wish to be great for your sake; we wish to be strong in order to give you all our strength; we desire the conquest, but only to place it at your feet. To every kiss of yours may the human family owe a great attainment; to every endearment of yours, a useful deed! May your love be the highest and dearest prize to every ambition! True, you are weak; but when you are desired you are very strong. Who dares assert that he is stronger than the "no" of a woman? What phalanx attempts to advance when the finger of woman threatens and commands: "Stand back!"?

Woman sins at least four times less than man; she fears crime, she is horrified at the very thought of crime. Let us, then, disarm the man who too often wounds or strikes; let the coward find no woman who loves him, let him have no cup but that of the coarsest voluptuousness; let the ignorant, the debased, the social parasites, all the fiends of the moral world, find no bosom of woman on which to rest their heads! As the Church once would banish excommunicated persons, so that they could find no bread, no shelter, it should so be with moral monsters: let them be banished from the region of love! And the elect women, whom nature favored with the fateful gift of beauty, should preserve their treasures for the strong and the immortal; their smiles should be the crown of triumphing genius and magnanimous heart, for genius and beauty are the most sublime interlacement of human forces, one of the most splendid pictures of the nature of living beings.

THE DEPTHS AND THE HEIGHTS OF LOVE

Love, after having spread the minute fibrils of its tiny roots into all the deep fissures of the human world and absorbed every drop of liquor, every throb of energy, sends up to the branches of the robust tree every sap and every energy; and there, high in the air, leaves, flowers, and fruits drink from the rays of the sun the sweetest and most inebriating voluptuousness. There, in those regions full of light and heat, and which no worm of the soil, no atom of dust, no miasmatic exhalation ever attain, profundity becomes sublimity, and man and woman, blended in the ecstasy of an ardent contemplation of the beautiful and the good, ask of themselves: "And what is God?"

CHAPTER IX

SUBLIME PUERILITIES OF LOVE

LIKE the butterfly, which, when just emerged from the involucre of the chrysalis, still bears on its folded wings some strips of the wrapping in which it was long enveloped, so Love, the youngest of human passions, carries remnants of the robe of childhood which he has just discarded. In his caprices and in his follies, in his games full of grace and strength, in his blind idolatries and in his childish sorrows, you would say that you behold before you a child genius. Now he surprises you with his violence, then he awakens your sympathy for his weakness; now all powerful, then most timid; now a hero, then a coward; today he defies heaven with closed fists; tomorrow he will with tears implore a caress. Love is childish because he is a child; childish because he is a poet; childish because, unleashing all the impulses of the moral world, and agitating in a convulsive kaleidoscope all the images of thought, he is more often lyric than epic, and writes more dithyrambs than stories, more poems than philosophical treatises.

Furthermore, Love is puerile because he is also so religious as to be superstitious and subject to all the nonsensical ideas that may pass through the brain of a timid and ignorant woman. Love, even in northern countries, delights in the pomp of the idolatry which is most characteristic of the south, protests against the severe worship of certain religious sects and, being a great admirer of churchly gorgeousness, demands incense, images, tinsel, altars, insignia, canopies and tabernacles.

No religion ever had more senseless idolatry than Love, no

Olympus had more gods, more altars and more priests. He accepts every belief, every worship, from the fetish of the savage to the omnipotent, invisible God of nobler religions. Full of faith and fears, Love would himself have invented idolatry if this had not had an infinity of other roots to sprout from through the human brain.

When man feels, desires, loves very much, and has reached the furthermost boundary of the human field, he always erects an altar with the richest and most beautiful material at his command and there, on his knees, prays and adores; often he prays and adores at the same time. To that altar he brings the amber and the coral gathered on the sea-shore and the gold found in the sands of the stream, the poetry found in his erratic wanderings through the heaven of the ideal, the most beautiful flowers of his thought, and offers all as a tribute to a creature of earth or space, of nature or imagination. And to love, also, man erects his altar, at the furthermost boundary of the human world, and, on his knees, solemnly asserts that beautiful, good and holy above everything is the creature whom he loves. Not satisfied with this, he raises himself upon the altar and casts avidious glances into the darkness of the unknown, where no form appears to him but the expansion and the reflection of the rays of this world; and there he is suspended over the abysses of nothingness. In that darkness live all the infinities, all the gods, all the human loves carried into the farthest regions of the ideal.

To love, everything is holy that has been touched by the hand, the eye, or the thought of the beloved, everything in which the dear image is reflected. All these become an object of worship, all is transformed into a magic mirror in which we contemplate our god. Who does not remember the adoration for a rosebush from which *she* had plucked a flower, and the idolatry for a petal which *she* had scented; and who does not remember the thousand various and foolish relics of love?

In the reliquary of love have found a place the beautiful and the grotesque, the horrid and the graceful. I had a

friend who used to weep for long hours with joy and emotion, kissing and contemplating a thread of silk which *she* had held in her hands, and which was for him the only relic of love. Another kept on his desk for long years the skull of his sweetheart as his dearest companion. There are those who have slept for months and years with a book, a dress, a shawl. And who can enumerate all the sublime puerilities, all the ardent tendernesses, all the insensate acts of the idolatry of love?

Sensations accumulate such mysterious and deep energies in the brain of man, that, at a sign from us, they can all spring up and erect an edifice before us, greater and more beautiful than the reality of things. No woman was ever as beautiful as the image which her lover sees in the calm of his solitary adoration, or pictures upon the black ground of a night of dreams, a comparison which would often be dangerous, if the magic brush of imagination did not also overcolor the beauty of the things seen by the eye and caressed by the hand; but it is a comparison, however, which often sows the lives of artists and poets with sorrow, delusions and even crimes.

If every beautiful woman could know all the kisses, all the caresses, all the hymns offered to her by the multitude of men who admire and desire her, she would certainly feel proud that she possessed the power of calling forth so many energies from the world of the living. Who knows where all those rays end, where the heat of so many motions accumulates, where such a scattered force gathers again? If it is true that nothing is lost of all that is generated, what transformation takes place in so many ardent desires that extend in the infinite void of space?

Modesty imposes a great sobriety of behavior on woman, often a tyrannical reserve. She conceals from our eyes the most intimate adorations, the revels of the heart and the strange hysterics of sentiment. We, always less enamored than she, give vent more freely to our effervescence; and if a beautiful and fortunate woman should describe the scenes which she has witnessed in her youth, she would present a

collection of caricatures before which all others would grow dim and mawkish; a collection which would combine the grotesque with the sublime, folly with passion, impudent threats of death and impossible fasts; sudden abandonments of one's dignity, abdications of common sense, stupid sacrifices of one's own personality, orgies of fancy and hurricanes of the senses, humiliations worthy of a Franciscan friar and braggart rodomontades. How much misery, how many carnivals and bacchanalia, and how much baseness has woman to witness! Fortunately for us, she is merciful and modest; for our honor's sake, she covers us with a corner of her queenly mantle, hiding our puerilities from the eyes of the profane, and often from our own.

CHAPTER X

BOUNDARIES OF LOVE, AND THEIR RELATIONS TO THE SENSES

A COUNTRY cannot be surveyed without tracing exactly its boundaries, without following them in their capricious and serpentine lines, without marking the point where its individuality ends and the influence of the neighboring country begins to be felt. You may have trampled every clod, wandered through every path, scented the soil of every field, and drunk the water of every spring and every stream; but if you have not sketched the confines of a country, you know less than half its history. Everything is important for what it is and what adjoins it. Not one, then, in this world can impunely be near to another, and all things act and react reciprocally. So it is with love, which has frontiers as vast as the human world, as indented as the coast of Dalmatia or of Norway, capricious, irregular, changeable. It is a land which projects into all adjacent countries, and with it sense, sentiment and thought come into close and complicated contact.

Every sense, every passion, every force of the mind is an instrument of love; but this, in turn, bends in a thousand different ways to senses, passions and thoughts. It is a continual interlacing of factors and instruments, of causes and effects; and while this gigantic power warms and agitates the inmost fibers of the human organism, it radiates its penetrating light to the furthermost confines of the world.

Love, which by the supreme right of existence requires the contact of two different natures, which is but the kiss of two creatures who blend for an instant and fuse together the germs of their power, must have most varied, numberless

relations to the sense of touch. It could even be said, without departing from strict scientific truth, that physical love is a sublime form of contact and touch. In inferior animal forms, as well as in human natures of a low and bestial type, love is nothing but touch and contact; but ascending to the high spheres of the animal world and of the human microcosm, the other senses also add their flowers to the garland of love, with the exception of taste, which takes no part in the pleasures of love, except in peculiar cases, which can, without any scruple, be entrusted to the clinic of pathological psychology. Of the other four senses, touch has the greatest part in love, hearing the smallest; sight and smell range between the two former in very different degrees.

The senses, however, differ more in the nature of the joys and sorrows with which they take part in the greatest of human passions than in the various quantities of elements which they yield to love. Touch conquers, and twinges with delight; sight reveals and charms; hearing impassions and conquers; smell cherishes and inebriates. We can easily have a comparative idea of the various parts which the four senses take in love by comparing these four moments: To see the beloved woman and gaze at her for a long time; to embrace her passionately; to hear her voice without seeing her; to inhale voluptuously the aroma with which she is wont to scent her robe.

A thousand, a hundred thousand, a million notes would be insufficient to express all the harmonies and melodies of amorous contact; and as the most voluminous dictionary in the world would decline to enter upon such an undertaking, the pen of the writer would slip into the field where science becomes lasciviousness. I regret at times that one of the greatest poets did not sing the sublime voluptuousness of love with such loftiness of style as to leave his pen uncontaminated. Perhaps man would like to know also the limits of the genius of lust, to mark the confines, too, of this human possibility; but I find some consolation for this sublime ignorance of ours, for this glorious lacuna left by modesty in the field of human knowledge, in thinking that where poetry

kept silent and science inactive, where an intimate contact of two kisses creates a new existence, an unknown current transmits to the new man, together with the sparks of life, all the treasures of past voluptuousness; and the son of Adam, with a second kiss, will transmit the innate science of love, pour all the nectar of the chalice of voluptuousness into the lips of the daughter of Eve. Sublime science, which was never written on papyrus nor sculptured in marble or bronze, but is transmitted in the flash of a kiss through thousands of generations that loved, love, and will love!

From the purest caress on a mass of hair to the greatest hurricane of voluptuousness, touch always keeps the character moulded for it by its anatomy. Touch, in love, is always made oversensitive by voluptuousness, always deeply sensual, is always a positive, definite, uncontrasted and uncontrastable possession. Woman may delude herself into believing that she is unblemished by man's contact when his hand has but touched the hem of her garments or the leather of her shoes; but when skin has touched skin, when a finger has touched a finger, something is already lost of that waxy varnish which nature spreads upon the virginal fruit still preserving the perfume of the tree that nourished it. A hand that clasps a hand means, in love, two fires that blend in one; a mass of hair that touches a mass of hair means two streams of voluptuousness rushing into the bed of one river; two feet that come in contact are always two sparks that fly. A molecule of a man who loves can never touch impunely a molecule of the woman who returns his love; and although the contact may be more rapid than lightning, every molecule that returns to the spheres of its own individuality carries away something that does not belong to it, and leaves with the other something of itself. Touch soft iron with the loadstone and you will see it magnetized; touch a molecule of a man with that of a woman and the two molecules will not be what they were before. Touch is always the act of possession, and the thousand contacts can, gradually, steal so much, that we may find ourselves carried into the sphere of the woman we love, while she has entirely passed into our

sphere. Not in vain the modest woman trembles and rebels at every innocent contact. Every sensation of touch, in love, means a boundary that is eliminated between two properties; it means the loss of a property.

It is not hypocrisy alone that makes modesty more exacting in higher races; in exquisitely elevated natures a contact is more dangerous because it radiates rapidly into the field of voluptuousness, into that of the other senses and that of sentiment. Vulgar natures begin where refined natures end; and while too elevated natures live long together, held back by the barrier of a handshake, the bold and uncouth rustic throws a kiss to the girl and embraces her at the first declaration of love. It is typical of this most powerful passion to perform a hundred miracles a day and thus arrest voluptuousness at the last boundary of kissing; but adroitness and fortune are necessary to make it possible to stop there for a long time. From handclasping to the kiss the path may be very long and even endless; but beyond a kiss given and returned, every definite boundary has vanished and everything is possible. Even in touch love has but two principal stations before the goal is reached; handclasping and kiss. Whoever believes she has remained a virgin after a kiss given and returned is a hypocrite, like him who believes that the studied reticence of lust may still leave something to conquer. O women who have the dangerous fortune to be beautiful and to be desired, do not let your adorers go beyond handclasping; you may in rare cases arrive at the kiss that you may receive; but remember that a kiss returned is a tremendous bond, which you should never sign,—never, of course, unless you intend to change your name.

Sight is the first messenger of love, and in elect natures it is so prodigal of joy to lovers as to excel, in extensity if not in intensity, even the insuperable heights of voluptuousness. Sight possesses everything save the delirium of possession, and rapid and penetrating as it is, it sounds at a stroke the abysses of infinite beauty, over which is suspended, as in a halo, the object of our love. What one contemplates with

the eyes of love from head to foot always ends in two infinities into which desire hurls itself with frenzied audacity and insatiable curiosity. Sight is made to accompany us in that delicious excursion; and as it can tarry long and suavely at a dimple of the cheek, at the little vortex of a curl or at the opalescence of a nail, it can also compel us to pass and repass with vertiginous speed, a thousand times in a minute, through the divine lines that enclose our treasure.

The eyes of love have all the virtue of the telescope and the microscope, and while not a single curve of the thousand labyrinths through which the mobile feminine beauty seems to flutter and flicker can escape them, they also attain the most sublime summits of ideal beauty. When the eye admires and conquers, it invites to the picture which it draws from nature all senses, all passions, all thought, all psychical energies of man. No other sense possesses this gigantic faculty of elevating us to the highest regions of the ideal, compelling the minor senses, the animal instincts and the lower passions to contemplate its panoramas. The eye is the first minister of the mind, and while it refines desire and frees passion from the coarsest lasciviousness, it elevates the man and woman who love to the highest spheres of human possibility. Touch likes to remove the veils that cover the beautiful; sight need not divest the object it contemplates, for its light illumines every shade, penetrates through opaque bodies and makes them transparent, threads its way through the most intricate folds, and while it sees it also surmises, inspects, divines, analyzes, measures, compares and controls with incredible agility all the elements of the esthetic world.

The eye which rests the rays of its light on a loving eye illumines it, is illumined in turn and shows to us the phenomenon of two brilliant stars exchanging their lights and rendering themselves more beautiful. If one does not lower the chaste eyelids, it may so happen that the fire will spread from the high spheres of the esthetic ideal down to the vile and brutish instincts. This, in fact, happens in all men of a base type; every emotion of love is rapidly transferred to

the regions of touch. In elect natures, on the contrary, sight has ever some beauty to discover, a region to explore, a world to conquer. The richest man in the world can always count the dollars and the stocks he possesses; the most powerful king can always know the extent in square miles of his dominions: but he who loves a beautiful creature dies without having seen, contemplated or admired all. In the last day of his life there is always some "unknown land" which the eye has not yet discovered or sufficiently explored. And this is just the intimate difference which distinguishes touch from sight. While the former has well determined boundaries and a definite task, the latter widens the limits of its dominions to include a number infinitely greater in esthetic combinations. In a flash of the eye you have seen a beautiful being and immediately said: "Oh, the angelic creature!" A chaos of sensations, a world of beautiful things have surprised, enraptured, enamored you; but how many days, how many months, how many years will be required for your eyes to roam through the thousand paths of that garden, to study every flower, every petal of each flower. What intensity of voluptuous analysis, how many poems of delight, in order to say again, five or ten years after: "Oh, the angelic creature!"

Nature was very generous in distributing attractions in the bodies of man and woman, and the short, sad day of our life always vanishes before we have been enabled to see all the forms of human beauty. But to the esthetic treasures of nature, man succeeded in adding those of art; and with the thousand artifices of garment and ornaments, we have added to our forms such and so many beauties that it is easier to imagine than to enumerate them. Perhaps I will some day attempt to write a "Physiology of Beauty," in which, if I do, I intend to point out the general laws which govern the esthetic world. Here I must only describe the confines where love and beauty meet and, in turn, kiss and fecundate each other. When the eye has love for a companion it finds a new world to contemplate in the cerulean star-thistle which our sweetheart interweaves for the first time in her

golden hair, or in the crimson geranium which gives a magnificent relief to her raven locks; a naughty little muslin apron may become a new continent, and a glove, which too cruelly and too tightly squeezes a rosy little hand, may enclose in the nest of its little buttons of mother of pearl so many new beauties as to stir our senses or infuse an unknown voluptuousness into us. The man who loves a beautiful woman laughs compassionately at the polygamist pasha who needs a hundred women to find the hundred beauties of the human Venus; and the beautiful woman, in the arsenal of her garments, in the variety of her smiles, in the thousand undulations of her flexuous body, evokes before the eyes of her lover not a hundred, but a thousand women, all beautiful with a different beauty.

Sight is the only sense which, in love, proceeds to effect moral and intellectual discoveries in the person beloved; and we not only contemplate to admire and to enjoy, but also to discover, by the flash of the eye and the throbbing of the facial muscles, how many affections, how many thoughts we can find in the one whom we intend to make ours forever. However, beauty is such a powerful tyrant in love that it forces us under its yoke and usurps the rights of the highest needs. A beautiful woman who is desired seldom seems to us frivolous and heartless, and the fascination of beauty may impel us to pardon every crime, to accept the most shameful compromises with our conscience, and may cause in us the most ridiculous and farcical hallucinations. However, this fault is not of the eyes, that see, but of the senses, that desire too ardently; and, above all, of nature, which has such a loving care of the forms in which germs are moulded into living bodies. Nature defends and protects the beautiful above everything else, perhaps because it is the crucible in which the good and the true are melted together.

If I wished to indicate by an ideographic sign all the varied and essential parts which the sense of sight assumes in love, I would use the figure of a winged messenger, a sort of Mercury, with the left hand leading Voluptuousness on the earth, and with the right directing our gaze toward the

highest regions of the ideal, where in holiest and most tender company live the good and the beautiful, the true and the sublime, where are preserved all the variform archetypes of sublimity.

Hearing has a small but interesting part in the story of love, if we set aside the prominent part it has as an instrument of thought. We are not to discuss here music or the value of ideas communicated through words, but the purely sensual influence of the ear in amorous phenomena.

Hearing yields some pleasures almost tactile, and always very sensual, such as are brought to us by some sounds which may be termed lascivious (the swish of a silk gown, the warbling of some birds, the murmur of certain waves, etc.); but beyond these rare exceptions, hearing has a tender, affectionate part. We would say that it stirs affections, predisposing them to vibrate with the sweetest, most impassioned notes. Man and woman have each a peculiar voice, and the sexual character of the feminine voice affects man, while the virile timbre of his voice causes woman's heart to throb with the most deeply sexual desires. There are some feminine voices that cannot be heard with impunity, so suavely do their notes penetrate into the greatest depths of the heart, which throbs with excitement and emotion. The voice of some women resembles a caress by the wing of a swan; and while it delights us, it perturbs and confuses us, affects us deeply and lastingly. Man and woman, through the notes of their voices, chastely reveal their sex, and the heart palpitates violently, as that of a girl bathing, who, before trusting her little foot to the wave, looks around as though frightened by the rustle of the leaves.

The sound of the voice, beyond the idea it represents, cannot say, "I am beautiful, I am intelligent," but it can say, alone, many other sweet things: "I am a woman, I am very much of a woman, I desire much, I am languishing with love, I am alone, I want you at once, I await you ardently," etc.

The seduction of the voice has some of the characteristics attributed to ancient sorcery; it surprises, fascinates and conquers us, and we are unable to discover the cause of such a storm roused by a few sounds, a few words. We feel ourselves almost humiliated at being vanquished without a battle, carried off without our consent; and the fascination of a voice seems to us the work of a witch. More than once we have resisted the seductions of sight, the violence of touch; but the voice conquers us, delivers us, bound, hand and foot, into the arms of a mysterious power which demands from us the blindest submission, against which rebellion is impossible. And this influence of the voice lasts a long time, is never forgotten, often survives love itself.

After long years of silence, indifference, contempt, the wind carries to us the sound of a voice; and we feel ourselves disturbed, surprised, reconquered, as in the first day of our love. Hearing will cast its fishing-line into the deepest waters of our affection; and more than one love has been resuscitated miraculously from the coldest ashes by a dear voice which we had, perhaps, long since forgotten.

Love has many mysterious relations to the olfactory sense. In the animal world perfumes are often the more direct and powerful instigators in amorous struggles; and even before the female has seen the companion by whom she desires to be conquered, the wings of the wind have carried to her nostrils a perfume that inebriates and fills her with voluptuousness.

This sense may be a powerful excitant in inferior races, or in the lower type of men of high races, but it exercises, in love, a powerful influence even in the most refined natures, by means of perfumes which we have conquered from nature and which, by the omnipotence of chemistry, we know how to reproduce without having recourse to the power of life. We have brought into our power the essence of every petal, the perfume of every calyx, of every leaf, of every bark, the repugnant smell of many enamored animals, and, with impudent art, mixing the odors of flowers with exciting aromas,

we have concentrated in a few drops of essence so much olfactory voluptuousness as warm spring could hardly concentrate in a flowering meadow or in a tropical forest. Now the deep and intense voluptuousness of perfumes is the daughter of a remote atavism which makes us susceptible of the sexual exhalations of many living beings and, solely for this reason, no sense has more intimate ties with animal voluptuousness than smell.

If you study the expression on the face of a woman who is scenting a very odorous flower and feels as though inebriated, you will see that such a picture resembles, more than anything else, a sublime scene of love. Ask many oversensual men and they will tell you that they cannot visit with impunity the laboratories where essences and perfumes are made. Ask the art of the perfume-maker, and it will answer that, after having mixed a hundred essences of flowers and leaves, it gives relief to and improves all those perfumes by adding an infinitesimal quantity of a matter, fetid in itself, but taken from the organs of love of some animal. Ask why women love perfumes so much, and perhaps a few will be able to tell you, or will answer with a blush. And if by a long experience they have already learned the most subtle mysteries of the senses, all the finest arts of coquetry, they will tell you that perfumes are a powerful weapon in the arsenal of love and that some of them possess an irresistible charm over the senses of man.

It is difficult to remain a long time in the warm atmosphere of voluptuousness without sacrificing a great part of those noble forces which are destined for higher attainments; and this explains why no impassioned mania for perfumes can have a moral influence over us. He who plunges into the tepid, titillating and morbid wave of odors no longer measures his strength in relation to a chaste and robust virility, but squeezes from the fruit the last drop of juice, and in the rapid convulsion of weariness imagines new delights. But between this human debasement and the contempt for perfumes there is an abyss, and by abandoning them to the courtesan, or to the savage woman who anoints herself from

head to foot, we throw away, without any reason, much of a dear and sweet voluptuousness which could be enjoyed and cultivated by us without any offense to morals.

Do you believe that a kiss given to that one whom you love and who is yours, through the petals of a rose, is a sin of lust? Do you ever believe that love gathered in a shower of violets, hyacinths and narcissus, between the crepuscules of two sighs, could be called lasciviousness? Nature is eternally rich, and the garlands we weave with her flowers around our joys do not deplete her inexhaustible gardens.

CHAPTER XI

BOUNDARIES OF LOVE—THEIR RELATIONS TO OTHER SENTIMENTS—JEALOUSY

In the Apollo room in the Vatican you will see an ancient bas-relief representing two bacchantes with the Dionysian thyrsus; one is standing, while the heat of voluptuousness is flaming within her; she bears the thyrsus, lust transpires on her face, and a bull is beating his horns against her legs; the other falls exhausted from intoxication. These are two moments of the voluptuousness of love, but they are also the two most elementary forms of the sentiment that bind man to woman. Now an ardent energy, then calm possession; now struggle that conquers, then affectionate blandishment that restrains. The most sublime, most constant, most perfect love that a man of superior race can desire or dream of, is a hot, bright flame, lasting as long as life, and at which, from time to time, are kindled the sparks of a desire that flares up, wavers and disappears.

Love, in comparison with all other sentiments, is such a thing that, when it comes in contact with them, it rules, attracts and draws them into the orbit of its movements, like a small fragment of cosmic matter which, having come too near to the sun, is attracted and devoured by that body. The sentiments are forces, each controlled by certain laws in its own sphere; when they come together, they conglomerate or eliminate each other, or exercise a mutual influence which causes them to deviate from the line followed by them a moment before. When an affection approaches love it is so powerfully influenced by it as to seem to disappear from the sight of the common people, while neither matter nor force can ever be destroyed, but can only change in form.

On this subject many fallacious arguments are advanced every day. It is said, for instance, that love is the most egotistic of sentiments, because we seek in it the greatest voluptuousness; but love and egotism are two affections that follow very different orbits, since the former causes us to love another creature and has as its object the preservation of the species, while the latter makes us love ourselves and tends to preserve the individual. If by egotism we mean the desire of satisfying a need, then all the sentiments, even the most generous ones, could be considered as forms of egotism, since even the martyr satisfies a very high need of a generous sentiment.

Love is, on the contrary, at perpetual war with egotism; and although the latter is a gigantic affection, yet it pales before the brilliant light of the Titan of the Affections. Many animals prefer death to abandoning the faithful companion. Even the toad suffers himself to be tortured, burned, to have his limbs amputated, his eyes gouged; but as long as he has one limb intact, he uses it to embrace the female in an amorous clasp. And do we not, too, offer as holocaust to love wealth, glory, science? Does not woman offer to love the long illness of gestation, the tortures of childbirth, the pains of nursing, the anxious cares of domestic and educational struggles? And how many think, in the intoxication of love, of the bitterness and the thorns which they are sowing in that moment; the history of sorrow which, perhaps, by an inexorable law, they are preparing for themselves?

Even the most perfect egotist, if he be a healthy man, desires and loves a woman. Apart from a few elect creatures to whom the supreme joys of the creations of thought are permitted, love represents the greatest of energies, the crowning of every edifice. We may thirst for wealth and glory as the greatest of joys, but in the background we behold the outline of a feminine creature at whose feet the trophies of victory must be laid. I do not speak of woman, because, for her, every satisfied vanity, every hoped for glory, all riches desired, every flower and every fruit of the garden of life must be laid at the feet of somebody, and this somebody is

always a man. The fireworks with which every festivity of life ends must always be a woman; at the bottom of every vulgar revelry and on the horizon of every sublime glory there is ever an Eve. To love and to be loved is of all human things the best; and even in the world of the suprasensible, the religions of every country have always promised to the good and the believer an eternity of love in the harem of voluptuousness, or in a mystic but amorous ecstasy. Read the burning pages of the mystic writers, and you will be able to tell me if all that fantastic world is not, too, a transubstantiation of love. The gods of every Olympus also have a sexual form, and there are feminine forms for the males and masculine forms for the females. From the cradle to the grave, love is for all and always the highest promise. Between the automatic lust of adolescence and the studied and covetous lecheries of old age, we pass, through the feverish hysteria of early youth, to the deep passions of virility; but for every age love is the sweetest joy. The tocsin of old age begins to sound when, with the first white hairs, we fear that we are no longer able to love; and every one ardently, anxiously hopes that the hour, the minute will never come for him in which he shall be compelled to say the tremendous words: "I cannot."

I do not deny that in some human monsters egotism, as a sacrifice made to the god "Myself," is so powerful as to exclude love; but such cases are very rare if they last the whole life, rare when they last for a shorter period. It often occurs that a man, trained to and living in the most sordid egotism, falls in love when old with a poor young girl, and becomes expansive with her, generous, prodigal, perhaps; and he too pays, at one time and in a very ridiculous way, the debt which nature in vain claimed from him during his young and mature age.

Great egotists also love, but in a selfish manner, denying the most prodigal and most splendid of the passions that tribute which they cannot refuse to themselves. They are ignorant of the most sublime joys, of the most inebriating enthusiasms of love, of the holy voluptuousness of loving a

woman more than oneself; but they also love, they love in their own way. If you wish to study the physiognomy of egotistical love, compare man's with woman's love and you will find it easy to penetrate into the mysteries of this part of psychology; and if you desire a more striking contrast, that the differences may be represented in a bolder relief, compare the love of an old man with that of a young woman: you will have in the former an egotistical type of love, in the latter a generous one.

More complex are the influences which the sentiment of possession and that of self-esteem exercise upon love, and the importance given to jealousy is sufficient to prove this.

The physiological study of jealousy would be sufficient, if it were still needed, to demonstrate the queer confusion of language in relation to psychical facts. One would say that it is the language of the alchemists, employed to express the chemical composition of bodies; one would believe that we are still dealing with the "nothing white," the "philosophic wool" and the "tetrascelitetraoxicoquindodeca" of our good ancestors.

Jealousy really signifies a pain of the sentiment of love, or, to be more specific, the sentiment caused by the offense done us through the infidelity of the person we love. This pain is natural in all men, in all times and in almost all races. It is the injury to our property applied to love. The child scratches and bites him who touches or spoils its fruits or its toy; it grieves us to be robbed of our books, of the flowers of our garden. It is natural, then, that he who touches our sweetheart, our dearest thing, should be hated. And, in fact, this jealousy is but a form of hatred, the most natural, the most legitimate of all hatreds. It is not necessary to create a new energy or a new word to express this hatred. We may beat or kill a man because he has brutally offended our son, our father, our friend, our country, our sweetheart; five offenses given to five different sentiments, but always hatred aroused by grief, energy developed by the same mechanism. The paternal, the filial, the friendly sentiment, the devotion to our country, love have been offended

in us, and we have responded with a centrifugal hatred, with blows or death. But in these various cases, was the presence of a new sentiment deemed necessary in order that the crime might be committed? Certainly not. It was said that the paternal affection, injured, had aroused such distress in us as to lead to assault or assassination; it was simply asserted that an insult to the flag of our country had rendered us blind and led us to commit violence; and why, then, when love is offended, should we create a new sentiment—jealousy? All sentiments, when satisfied, lead us to close friendships, to endearments, to be of assistance to those who have given us these satisfactions. All injured sentiments lead us, on the contrary, to repel those who have offended them, to harm those from whom we have received that pain.

Is it jealousy, then, the hatred that an animal manifests toward any creature which interrupts it in its loves? Well, for many savages, to whom love is nothing but sexual intercourse, all the phenomena of jealousy are reduced to this single form. When the instinct is satisfied, as the unions are promiscuous and woman is considered common property, there can be no jealousy. If woman is a cup out of which every one may drink, why should there be jealousy? A Bolivian woman once cynically told me: "Woman is the water of a stream. Throw a stone into it: will you be able to tell me a minute afterward where the stone broke that water? You are very foolish, you man, to make distinctions between identical things!"

In polygamous races, man only can be jealous; in polyandric ones, woman alone can be jealous legally. With various nations, woman is a property like any other; hence she can be voluntarily offered to the friend or to the guest, like a horse or a dog. They do not want anybody to steal her, but she can be given away without either disgrace or jealousy. Only in the higher and monogamous races the sentiments of love, self-esteem and property, forming a triple armor around our woman, incite us to defend her "with claws and beak"; and to this unyielding body, consisting of the union of three sentiments, we give the name of "jealousy"; and

here we have a second psychical form, another thing called by the same name.

But, as though such confusion were not already excessive, we have called jealousy a special psychical individual organization by which we become suspicious and tyrannical toward the person we love and whom we offend without any reason and from whom we withhold all legitimate liberty. And after having confused three different things, that is to say, the grief of injured love, the triple combination of three sentiments—love, self-pride, possession—and a pathological irritability of suspicion, we discuss at length, and always in vain, in order to decide whether all men are jealous and whether jealousy measures love with an exact ruler and whether anyone can love without being jealous: vain, not to say puerile, discussions, which would not take place if words were previously defined. If by jealousy you mean the sorrow caused by not being loved or by being deceived, then every heart that loves must be jealous; thus, whoever loves country, mother, son, cannot witness without sorrow an offense offered to son, mother, country. But if by jealousy you mean that form of tyrannical suspicion which tortures the person possessed by it, then I shall tell you that we very well can and should love without ever feeling that jealousy, and that we can be jealous even without loving. Let us proceed to an elementary analysis, and we shall understand each other. Under the name of a single sentiment, of a single effective energy, the most dissimilar phenomena are grouped, to wit:

(1) The sorrow caused by a love offense;
(2) The sorrow for an injury to property;
(3) A sorrow born of the sentiment of self-esteem;
(4) An habitual, constitutional suspicion, which centers on the person beloved or possessed.

The only common ties among these psychical phenomena are these: that all apply to a love offended, or alleged to be offended, and that they are all accompanied by grief. Such an empiricism, such a coarse empiricism! Is this not actual

alchemy, that which called all volatile bodies "spirits," and the oxide of zinc "philosophic wool"!

As jealousy is not an elementary psychical phenomenon, but simply an empirical mixture, it has many and varied ethnical forms, and becomes necessary in all countries where polygamy prevents man from physically and morally satisfying a woman, and where the husband, merely because he is rich and powerful, selects his wife and forces his love upon her. The jealousy of many Oriental nations is proverbial, and perhaps monogamous peoples become jealous through contact with polygamous ones, as in Sicily and in certain parts of Spain. It seems to me, however, that in some cases jealousy has not a clear historical origin, but assumes an ethnical character, according to the special constitution of a race. In any case, in Europe, Italians, Spaniards, and, above all, Portuguese are very jealous; and, as I learned, in America the most jealous of all are the Brazilians.

The common people will certainly not be persuaded by my psychological analysis, and will continue to measure the force of love by the unreasonableness of suspicion; and many dear and lovely women will continue, heaven knows for how many centuries, to taunt their lovers with this foolish plaint: "You do not love me because you are not jealous. How can you love me if you do not feel for me the slightest jealousy?" Foolish lamentations, often uttered by happy creatures who, perhaps, finding it strange and against nature to be too happy, look for some occasion of sorrow and regret. Can anyone love anybody on earth more deeply than one's own children? Certainly not; and yet we are not jealous when others love them, and father and mother sublimely vie with each other in adoring and fondling them. You should love your companion in love in the same manner; and if you fear to lose him, that fear must not be the wrath of the inquisitor nor the clutch of the miser. Vain counsels! Words thrown to the winds! Jealousy is one of the most constitutional psychological maladies, and, if one is born with it, it is very difficult to cure. May a benign fate keep it

from you! It poisons the dearest joys of life; penetrates every pore of the skin; pours its gall into every drop of water, into every mouthful of bread; it transforms the man who loves into a policeman, always armed, with alert ear and prying eyes. And the jealous man is always spying, doubting, suffering; he investigates the past, the present and the future; he seeks the lie in a caress, indifference in a kiss; in love he always fears hypocrisy. What a hellish life! It is a hundred times better not to love than to love in this way. The punishment of the few jealous men with exquisitely gentle heart should be this: to know that those who are as jealous as they generally entertain more self-love than love, and that the highest and noblest creatures have always loved without jealousy. The day when we perceive that we are no longer loved, when we are deceived, let love die without replacing it with jealousy. From suspicion to condemnation or acquittal, between sincere lovers, the path cannot and must not be a long one; to a frank question, a frank answer; let suspicion or love die, but they should die in a hurricane or in a battle, die a violent death; they should not drag a miserable existence between the courts and the prisons. A hundred times better a lightning that kills us than the feverish jaundice which consumes the stamina of our lives, poisons all sources of our joy.

Jealousy, besides, as it has already largely declined in monogamous society, will continue to decrease in the future, when matrimony shall be but the sanctification of love, when the choice shall be always reciprocal, when in the moral relations between the two sexes all trace of hypocrisy shall have disappeared. To know that we are loved, esteemed, and to love and esteem our companion, deeply and sincerely, is the surest guarantee of defense against that sordid parasite, that wood-worm of love which is jealousy. Let woman cease to be a slave or a freedwoman, let the husband or lover cease to be the proprietor of a woman, and all those lepers of love, the jealousy-mad, will disappear at once.

Self-esteem, independent of jealousy, has many legitimate relations to love, of which it enriches the treasures. No

man, no woman in the world, knowing that he or she is loved by a most noble creature, can help feeling proud; and if a delicate reserve prohibits our heralding our good fortune, we can, however, relish the secret joy of knowing that the world envies us. It is almost always beyond human strength to renounce these joys, which can be delighted in without humiliating others and without any shadow of rancor. Woman, especially, with admirable art, knows how to say countless things silently; and when she is proud of a noble love, she radiates such an aureole of light as to dazzle the adorer and the apathetic. With the majesty of a queen and the reserve of a woman, and without opening her lips, she can say to all: "Envy me; I am loved!" Holy and just and chaste pride, which I wish all the daughters of Eve who shall have deserved love should feel.

Lovers and sweethearts, choirs of adorers and famous beauties may be objects of luxury, as are horses and palaces; and it is natural for human vanity to seek those things and to appreciate and utilize them to humiliate those who have them not. Vanity uses love, then, as a pretext; and many women, incapable of loving, may conquer men solely as trophies of war, just as men oftener than women may, through pure vanity, undertake a war of conquest. All these facts, however, belong to the history of pride and vanity, and we have already dealt with them in our study on the sources of love.

In that study we have seen by what paths one is led to love, and we were therefore obliged to consider friendship, compassion and many other sentiments as sources of love. But all endearing sentiments may have relation to the Prince of Affections; that is to say, take the place of love that wanes. When the sun shines in the heavens, the light of the moon and that of the minor stars are invisible; and in the same way, when love glows above the horizon of life, friendship, compassion, and all other tender affections can no longer be seen or felt; but when love disappears we can see the minor sentiments take its place.

Esteem, veneration and all other analogous sentiments may be companions of love; but only too often they are bestowed upon a creature who little deserves them. Love is a wizard that transforms and beautifies and magnifies everything he touches; and we can have immense esteem and deep veneration for the most despicable man, for the most abject, most wicked woman. It does not reflect much honor upon us, but it is true. No brigand ever stood in need of loves, often deep and ardent, and no beautiful courtesan ever lacked illustrious lovers. What does it matter if the object of love is a disgrace in everybody's eyes, spat upon by public contempt, set in the pillory of universal hatred?

We love him, we love her; that is enough. And why do we love him? Why do we love her? Because it pleases us. Before the inappellable rudeness of this explanation what can science say, what can morality suggest?

Science recognizes the fact and explains it. A creature despicable in every respect must please us very much to inspire us with love; and this sentiment must be really gigantic if it conquers human conventionalities, vulgar prejudices and the most persistent habits. It has been said with much truth that no woman was more ardently loved than a homely woman; and the same may be said of a brutal or criminal man, a woman of the street or abject for any reason. A great man, if accused of loving a debased or silly woman, could often, blushing with shame, strip her before the world, like ancient Phryne, saying: "Let him dare throw the first stone at me, who feels himself incapable of loving this beautiful creature!" And the man who, through crime or baseness, has been banned from civilized society, has in his heart, for the woman who loves him, some pure and virgin oasis in which his love is lying; he still has some untainted place reserved in his soul for the beloved one; and this love, concealed and bitter, possesses, for certain natures, all the perilous seductions of strong aromas and intoxicating poisons. No man in the world is entirely wicked; and some of the ferocious kindnesses of the assassin, some of the generous impulses of the thief are preserved for the companion of love.

Such is the omnipotence of this sentiment, which, like an ancient alchemist, transmutes the vilest metals into liquid gold and discovers the only diamond buried in the sand of a great alluvium! Science, then, admits loves without esteem, and, bowing its head with a blush of shame, acknowledges that they are only too frequent.

Where science is still and humiliates itself, morality erects its head and flagellates. Love without esteem is a crime—and a crime which breeds other crimes. Woe to us when, bold avengers of public contempt, we dare boast of loving a vile creature, and impudently parade such love, as though intending by our arrogance to impose silence on indignant decency, or by our insolence to act as pedestal for the offended paramour! Liars in our own eyes, we defy, alone, the holiest and most inviolable laws of beauty and honesty; and proud, first, then bold and insolent, we end by becoming truly ribalds, and all encircled and hidden by mire, we permit no gentle creature to approach us who could inspire us with a pure and noble affection. Human passions may try many stunts and tricks, but, in the end, natural sentiments, like normal situations, are the healthiest and most enjoyable. We can raise, for an instant, the vilest creatures on the shield of pride, but our arms will tire and we will roll into the mire, together with our idol of a day.

The woman we love must not only be the companion of our voluptuousness, but also the mother of our children; the man a woman loves must be the husband and the father of the family. We should not consecrate the blush of our face in that of our children, who will curse our wicked loves, and will, perhaps, execrate the name of the father or the memory of the mother. When pride has lost its keenness, and the hour of revenge has passed, woe to us if we shall find ourselves alone with a creature whom we cannot hold in estimation!

If Love is really the holiest thing of life, the most ardent affection, the most voluptuous joy, we must erect a temple to him, with our own hands, and with our most sublime sentiments decorate his tabernacle, in which we can worthily

adore him as a god. Love born among crimes and turpitudes is a nest woven with thorny shrubs and thistles, while we should weave it with the most aromatic leaves and the most beautiful flowers. Men and women, we should vie with each other in gleaning fields and gardens and in bearing to love every gentle affection, every noble aspiration, every impulse of lofty ambition. Lust and pride, when coupled, become the step-parents of every love without esteem, which, like every organism born of evil, lives a scrofulous and rachitic life, full of sorrows and calamities.

If love is really the most precious gem, we should enclose it in a casket which, for richness of material, artistic skill and inimitable esthetic conception, should be worthy of its contents. Nothing but noblest things should touch it; no breath, unless perfumed with sandalwood and roses, should be exhaled near it; no hand but that of an angel should caress it; no heat should warm it but that of the kisses of two loving lips.

If woman should concede her love only to the honest and industrious man, if it were possible that man loved no woman but a modest one, we would see the human family regenerated in the course of a generation, we would see men educated through voluptuousness. For the prison that terrifies, for the hell that threatens, we would then substitute the caresses of a woman, the kisses of a man, as educative energies. Shall this eternally be a dream? Shall we always threaten and assault men to make them better? Shall we not have a medicine less cruel than sorrow to cure men of vice and crime?

CHAPTER XII

BOUNDARIES OF LOVE—THEIR RELATIONS TO THOUGHT

THOUGHT may, for very different reasons, now be an ally and now a victim of love. First instrument of seduction, next to the external form of the body, thought revives, flares up in contact with the new sentiment, as occurs with every other energy condensed in our brain; and while it becomes purer, it strengthens itself, exhibiting some of its rarest, most exquisite fruits. Many torpid intellects do not awake except by the kiss of love, and then only to fall back into the previous lethargy the moment they are left without the stimulus of desire; but healthier brains, too, rise above themselves when called upon to offer an unusual tribute on the new altar. For very many, poetry is the song of spring, and, prosaic and mute before having loved, they return to their prose and taciturnity when the season of loves is past. As they are men, they may continue to possess a woman; but being poor in moral energy, in the May of their life they have only a smile of poetry, lasting as long as the petals of a rose. Their cold and indolent imagination indulges in a little flight among the bushes of the garden or the orchard; emits its feeble trill, then falls wingless on the highroad, plodding until death. How often a woman, who has been loved by one of these spring lovers and who remembers having once seen him, an ardent creature, full of imagination, finds it very difficult to persuade herself that the man who today is all prose, from head to foot, living between his chocolate and his nightcap, wearing seven varieties of flannels, and using ten different kinds of lozenges, once wrote verses and fell on his knees at her feet, which he covered with bitter tears!

More fortunate men, instead, derive from their loves a continual and powerful stimulus to the works of thought, which seems to reshape and renew itself at each different phase of passion, at each change of love. These influences upon the lives of many artists, poets, and even statesmen can be studied in their works, and have a stronger power when the artist, the poet, the head of the state is a woman.

The influence of love upon the forces and forms of thought is twofold, and is derived from self-love and from the psychical nature of the person loved. Being a sentiment born during youth or rejuvenated during old age, it especially excites the imagination and refines the aptitude for reproducing the beautiful; in a few words, it warms those mental aptitudes that generally reach their climax at the same age when love manifests its greatest energies. Very rarely a man can be a poet or a great artist without having loved intensely, without having had at least a great capacity for loving. Chastity, forced or voluntary, may conceal love; but down in the depths of the heart some images, resembling an angel more than a woman, have sway, rising at every inspiration of genius, at every song of the lyre, at every touch of the brush, and reviving or kindling the sacred fire of art. The genius of many among the greatest poets, artists and writers of the world had love as its first companion and supreme inspirer; and without this sentiment their names might be totally unknown to us. The love that is born in a sublime brain accumulates gigantic forces, and chastity, always imposed by great passions in their first stage, refines and intensifies them; so that love seems to transform into genius, and genius dyes with splendid hues every amorous manifestation. A chaste genius which loves is a legion of fighting forces, a whole host of winged geniuses, and therefore no difficult question, no irresistible force can oppose it. Thought, when the companion of love, offers to it the richest tributes of its energy, just as the enamored bird sings its most harmonious notes for its companion, the flower condenses all its perfumes and the fascination of its most beautiful colors around the nest in which plants love. And with

thought, intensified, transformed, adorned with all its splendors, goes the stimulus of self-esteem, which in the satisfaction of pride of the person loved finds always new incitement and new incentive to work. Nor does the creature loved receive only the tribute, but from the enthusiastic eloquence with which gratitude is expressed by that creature, it is manifest that the latter also feels the same inciting influence, and the most modest and stillest tongue finds splendors of form and savoriness of style unknown to that day.

A long experience in every country of the world demonstrates the superiority of woman over man in the epistolary style and especially in love-letter writing, which is the effect not only of the peculiar nature of the feminine mind but also of the powerful excitement created in woman by the stimulus of love. A letter is nearly always an exchange of affections, and woman more than man feels the intimate relations between two affections; she loves more and better than we. Man has a hundred different ways of exerting his talents when excited by love; art, ambition, science open to him a thousand avenues to manifest his new energies; to woman, on the contrary, no literary path is open other than amorous correspondence, and she uses and abuses it in a surprising manner. In the numberless hecatombs, in the daily pyres of many perfumed letters, real treasures of art are being destroyed, which should be saved from the conflagration that consumes so many volumes of words and phrases; for the commonplace always dominates every field of good and evil, and commonplace, like all things human, are most loves. Was it not Balzac who said: "It is recognized that in love all women have some 'esprit'"?

The eloquence of love, a real song of a gifted mind in love, is not contradicted by the timid and often dull silence which invariably accompanies the first declarations, the first skirmishes. Fear in all its forms desiccates the mouth and the pharynx, suspends nearly instantaneously the secretions of mucus and saliva, and many are made physically unable to speak, in the same manner as when a violent mental perturbation disconcerts ideas and words, so that eloquence is

reduced to an absolute silence, possibly interrupted only by disconnected phrases. That man so mute in love, however, has hardly returned to the quiet of his solitary room when he suddenly becomes a new Demosthenes, and pours out into space or on paper the rivers of a fiery eloquence, which a few moments before would have proved so opportune and so beautiful. Happy love, in the stage of attainment, raises all brains above medium temperature, continually infusing new energies into them. Even during the intoxication, the thyrsus of the dithyramb never falls from the hand of the happy mortal who loves or hopes to be loved. When, on the contrary, our affection vibrates with the notes of sorrow, a sublime elegy may be produced as the outburst of thought; one can become poet or insane. Brains better organized are cured of the great sorrows of the heart with a book, or a musical creation, or a picture; but many human brains submerge in the hurricane of an unhappy love, and the statistics of the hospitals for the insane always show a large number of cases of insanity produced by love, while in the secrecy of the domestic walls are concealed many other brains withered or fallen into lethargy through unfortunate loves.

I am writing in these pages a modest essay of general physiology, or, as it is usually termed, psychology, and have neither the right nor the strength to undertake the work of literary critic, which still remains to be done, notwithstanding the very beautiful things written by many upon the influence of love in art. Not only has every poet and every artist (and I consider the writer the greatest of all) left in his works the imprint of his loves, but he has felt and interpreted love in a way entirely his own, and which in some cases became the style of a school or an epoch. The woman loved by Byron is quite different from the woman loved by Burns; Laura is not Beatrice, and the woman dimly discerned by Leopardi is not Vittoria Colonna. To study the influences of the times and the mind over the particular mouldings of the loves of great men—in a few words, to draw the comparative psychology of celebrated loves and of the amorous types of art—is a gigantic labor, in which the

artist, the psychologist and the literary man should join hands in order to produce a work worthy of the subject. For me it will suffice to have prepared in the present essay some materials for this work of the future.

Love ceases to be an impulse for thought and becomes its first assassin, not only when it is unhappy, but also when it sinks into the mud of lust. Chastity is an almost entirely hygienic question, and here we should mark the place where the hygienic branch shoots out from the great trunk of physiology. No embrace has ever debased thought when voluptuousness was only love; but when lasciviousness is stronger than sentiment and the animal man regrets having given too much of himself to the future, then the individual rebels against the excessive tribute paid to the preservation of the species. Then the animal man is diseased and the moral man has fallen into libertinism. No; nature never punishes him who wisely obeys its laws, and after the sacrifice of love man is as happy and intelligent as before, since, in the blessed languor of a brief repose, nature stills even the pain of weariness.

"Lay waste the entire forest of concupiscence, not one tree alone. When you shall have felled every tree, cut every branch, you can then pronounce yourselves free, pure, virtuous," exclaims the Dhammapada, and science utters the same cry, but instead of the word "concupiscence" it writes the more precise term "lust." In our organism every function is so well regulated that we, like the citron, can always bear leaves, flowers and fruits, provided we do not sacrifice the fruit to the flower and do not imitate the monstrous flowers with over-expanded petals or seedless fruits. Wise chastity is the ablest administrator of vital harmonies and energies; love and labor do not oppose each other, as many too exacting or hypercritical moralists are continually repeating with too rigid severity.

I have previously stated that the influence of love over thought is twofold, and we have still to study its second manifestation, namely, the influence exerted by the psychical nature of the person loved. Two creatures who love each

other are two bodies differently electrified, continually exchanging currents of energy in order to reëstablish the equilibrium of forces and obey the law of universal affinity. But, since no two identical creatures, no two identical brains, no two identical sentiments ever exist in nature, it follows that, of the two thoughts brought face to face by love, one exercises an influence of attraction greater than the other, and consequently one of the two gives more than it receives. Generally the stronger mind exercises a greater fascination; and as the mind of man is oftener greater than that of woman, the latter more easily follows the ideas, the theories, the intellectual tastes of man. It is not always true, however, that a greater attraction betokens a greater mental force, since some peculiar characteristics of certain intellects render them more fascinating, their contact more dangerous and richer in elective affinity. Thought may be robust, original; but if rigid, rude and without any weapon of conquest, it lives alone, in solitary loftiness, and the person loved contemplates it with admiration, but feels no attraction. It is like a star, too cold and too distant for us to desire. Some other talents, on the contrary, seem to be magnetized, so strongly do they adhere to men and things; and when we approach them, we feel ourselves absorbed and, after their contact, carry away some influence of contagion, of fascination, of imitation. These magnetic brains combine with the other amorous seductions another and most powerful one, that of subjugating and bending the mind of the person loved, so that to the sweet chain of affection is added the chain of thought.

A most peculiar and little studied influence of fascinating talents is seen in some women, who add to their other admirable qualities the power of conquering the thought of men whose minds are stronger and swifter than theirs. Living with them, breathing their moral atmosphere, it becomes impossible, even for the most tenacious opposers of the ideas of others, not to think as they think, not to write as they write, not to acquire certain psychical tastes which constitute their delight. The style of certain writers, the manner of

certain painters have unconsciously yielded to these slow and mysterious influences; and the masses, investigating the origin of these esthetic mutations, seek it in mysterious causes and in evolutions of art and science, while, instead, they have a humbler but more natural source. The style and manner changed when the head was resting on the bosom of a blonde friend, or the hand playing among the curly labyrinths of raven hair. In the history of arts and of literature, mention of these influences is nearly always omitted because nearly always they are unknown to the biographer, and often unknown to the artist and the poet who was subject to them. Woman always confesses, and frequently with pride, that she has moulded her thought on that of her friend; man hardly acknowledges this, and if warned by criticism, rebels and feels hurt by such an odd accusation. How and when should the king of the universe ever change the style and the direction of his thought through the influence of a kiss or a caress? "Mine, and only mine!" exclaims the man who loves. "His, and only his!" always sighs the woman who loves; and I must, although with different words, have frequently said the same thing in this book.

It is not only the robust and attracting nature of human brains that measures their various influences in the struggles and the caresses of love, but it is the degree that causes the high influences of thought to be differently felt. The more one loves, the more one yields to the fascination of another's talent; the more one loves, the more one is disposed to abdicate one's own ideas and esthetic tastes in order to assume the ideas and the tastes of the person loved. Man, proudly awkward, constantly repeats in every tone that in politics, morality, religion, woman thinks always like her lover; and by this he deludes himself into believing that he affirms with the most eloquent proof the uncontrasted superiority of his mind. However, in our case he fails to mention a reason, most honorable for woman and little for us: woman generally feels more deeply the influence of a virile thought, not only because she is weaker than we, but because she loves us much more than we ever could love. She sacrifices instantly

and willingly even self-pride to love; man rarely and with difficulty makes this sacrifice. "She is silly, but beautiful," we say, feeling very happy. Woman, on the contrary, says oftener than we: "How can Democracy be respectable if he insults it every day? And how cannot Socialism be a sacred thing if it is his religion?" Man is always right for the woman who loves him, because she can seldom love without esteem. We, indeed, allow ourselves to love with all our senses a woman whom we cannot or must not hold in estimation. This difference would be sufficient to demonstrate that, in the psychical evolution of the two sexes, woman is ahead of us in the esthetic of sentiment, as we outrun her in intellectual development. Woman has already attained perfect love, which is the fusion of all human elements, the selection of selections; we see the concubine even in the sweetheart and in the wife; and the highest talent does not disdain to pour out the molten metal of its thoughts into the mould of a Venus who hardly could be called heavenly. In matters of love we are disciples oftener than masters on the field of sentiment.

Whatever be the reason for which a brain in love bends its love companion with a larger power of influence, the tyrant, too, undergoes the influence of the victim. Two thoughts cannot impunely be enclosed in the same atmosphere, they cannot follow the orbit of the same planetary system. The one gives much, and the other gives little; the one receives more than it gives, the other gives more than it receives; but they both alter and exchange influences and energies. This is a consequence of the most elementary laws of physics: two loves and two brains are two systems of forces; and, however powerful one may be in comparison with the other, they both must undergo, in their contacts, a molecular modification of their movements. To the direct influence of love add the automatic power of imitation, the tyranny of habit, the epicurism of the compromise of ideas and of conscience, and many other minor causes, and you will see how inexorably thought must change when we think in two.

Not all intellectual phenomena undergo the influence of love in equal measure, but those feel it most who by contacts and origins are nearer to the energies of sentiment or are interwoven with them, constituting binary bodies, composed of affection and thought. Religion and morality are more easily modified than esthetic tastes, and these change more frequently than philosophical theories or the method of study. There is a certain architecture in our brains that constitutes their framework and can be destroyed only by death or insanity. Against it love is powerless; furthermore, certain intellectual antitheses between a man and a woman are enough to render love impossible, even when the sympathy of forms and a certain community of affections violently rouse the sovereign of sentiments.

To scorn influences of love over thought may be the fruit of pride, but it is also, more frequently, an incontrovertible proof of crass ignorance,—pride and ignorance which we shall bitterly expiate, because, if we today may be contented with the beauty of form, and if robust youth, comforted later by coquetry, may prolong the life of love founded on voluptuousness only, the day will come, sooner or later, in which, when the great disparity of brains shall destroy every hope of common intelligence, we shall find ourselves in the presence of this horned dilemma: either to renounce dual thought—horrible amputation of intellectual life—or lower ourselves more every day in order that the voice of a person who speaks in a subdued tone may reach our ear. Hence a continual toil, a weary and sad exertion, the impairment of lofty intellects and the disorders of weak brains; hence the inevitable death of a love which should have submerged only with the last plank of shipwrecked beauty; hence the veiled polygamy of our modern society, profoundly hypocritical, because it is so impatient that it wants to run, when it has only the strength to walk slowly; because it is so petulant that it wants to jump while its legs are still tied by the sacred straps of the middle ages.

We must all inexorably yield to the influence of thought in love. If our robust brain can elevate in some little meas-

ure the smaller one of the person we love, we must always descend from our lofty plane, lowering the level of our thought and wasting many of the nobler forces of human progress. A certain disparity of levels is inevitable, but it should never be excessive, because, in the continual efforts to equalize them, in the sorrowful struggles to reach them, a great part of love may be wretchedly dissolved.

CHAPTER XIII

CHASTITY IN ITS RELATIONS TO LOVE

This chapter may to many readers seem utterly useless in a psychological work, since chastity is a question of hygiene or a negation of love; and in any case, someone could whisper in my ear: *"Non est hic locus."* Let the enemies of chastity, or those who do not know what chastity is, jump this chapter, which will be among the shortest in the book, and allow us, when we speak of light, to say at least what shade means.

Chastity is the shadow of love, and the most enthusiastic among the adorers of the sun seeks always the friendly shade of a tree where, among the labyrinths of the knotty roots, or on the soft carpet of a meadow, he can slowly drink in the light of which he went in search; he, too, must love a tranquil shade from which to contemplate without injury the distant splendors of the supreme father of every energy and every heat. Even in the desert of sand called the Sahara, or in the desert of grass called the Pampas, man feels the necessity of resting in the shadow of his camel, or of his horse, to brood voluptuously over the long and fiery suns absorbed. Repose you, also, then in the shadow of the hair, of the eyebrows of your sweetheart to relish the long memories of the lightning flashes of love.

Chastity is not only repose, but also a wise and powerful creation of new energies and infinite poetry. Voluptuousness is a hurricane or thunderbolt, but always a superior force which brutally rends and brutally bends the tree of life, dashing the leaves against the ground that nourishes them. Chastity is a boundless temple, in which the fresh and silent atmosphere dries the sweat of the struggles, refreshes the sultry air of the battle and restores calm to every

turbulent and stormy brow. The chastity of two lovers is a real temple in which the animal man collects himself, prays and invokes an unknown god that he may make him an angel; and love is purified, cleansed of all mire, and soars on its wings to the highest regions of the ideal. Desire, when subdued without violence but without hesitation by chastity, lowers its eyes, bows its head and kneels before the statue of love, and, quivering but subdued, caresses with its long neck and warm hair the soft knees, like an enamored swan fondled by the gentle hand of a nude but chaste woman.

Have you ever noticed two lovers who, sitting on one chair, read the same book together, while a little child, the fruit of their first loves, sits at their feet, chattering and prattling? When that little angel raises its head too petulantly or screams too boisterously, the fondling hand of the mother or that of the father will silence him. Thus must desire long remain under restraint at the feet of the two lovers, obeying an amorous voice and not the rod of the schoolmaster of old.

No more odious virtue exists than chastity taught by the intolerant and often not very chaste prude; no more delicate, more sublime virtue than chastity taught by love and by the noblest faculties of the human mind. An immodest love, an unchaste love may be happy for a time; it may laugh and smile, let itself be carried away by the maelstrom of voluptuousness into a revel of unrestrained dances; but it is always an inebriated love, and inebriety ends quickly and, generally, very badly. Chaste love is ardent but serene; a love always armed and always cheerful; a sapphire illuminated by electric light. Self-imposed chastity is a hidden form of onanism, disease or mania; the evidence of something lacking in a man, or of a violent amputation, of a cruel mutilation. The free and sweet chastity of two lovers is a most wise lust, which sacrifices the daily bread to the splendors of a Sardanapalian banquet; an education of senses and affections; a most holy worship of the noblest joys of thought; one of the most precious gems that can adorn the crown of life. Blessed are those who know how

to be chaste in this manner, to turn love into an energy that educates and etherealizes, and who find in it the greater coefficient of noble ambitions and magnanimous purposes!

And you, women, you who have the "intellect of love," teach chastity to us, for whom this holiest of virtues is difficult to acquire. Prize dearly this delicate mission, because you will be the first to enjoy its fruits. Through an ignoble and vulgar calculation, you prefer to disarm your lovers in order that they may not strike other victims than you,—perhaps, also, that they may not hurt their own hands; but your calculation is groundless. From the nausea of satiety more infidelity has sprung than from the prudent restraint of desires; and to leave a desire always lighted, and a flower in your garden always untouched, is one of the most precious secrets for reigning eternally, for being always loved.

There is an absolute chastity imposed by the cruel laws of sects or of society, but this is not the place to speak of it. And there is another absolute chastity imposed by ambition, by a misinterpreted virtue, or even by egotism; a chastity which, at the bottom, is nothing else than self-idolatry, a rabid concentration of forces to reach lofty or insensate ends. The fruit which human voluptuousness reaps is, however, generally beneath its desire or expectation, and nature wreaks its vengeance in a thousand ways upon those who outrage it. In many cases, however, true, sincere chastity, imposed by an iron will, is an admirable thing, deserving a place among the rarest and most valuable things in a museum. Not one case in a hundred of those upon which history has bestowed veneration deserves the praises which are habitually offered to them, because many of these forms of chastity are false, or easy through impotency; they are, therefore, false virtues. Other chastities are as sterile as the sands of the desert, they are clouds that rise without shape and without aim in the imagination of the human heart, and vanish without leaving any trace. Be that as it may, they do not belong to the history of love, and to discuss them here would entitle the gentle reader to whisper in my ear a second time: "*Non est hic locus.*"

CHAPTER XIV

LOVE IN SEX

MAN and woman can love with the same degree of force, but they will never love in the same manner, since to the altar of their passion they carry two greatly different natures beside their different genetic missions. As long as there shall live on our planet a man and a woman, they will eternally exchange and counterchange this innocent reproach: "Ah, you do not love me as I love you!" And the lament will be forever true, because woman will never love like man, and man will never be capable of loving like woman. In a complete essay on the comparative psychology of the two sexes we could delineate the distinctive characteristics of virile love and feminine love, and I may try it some day; be it sufficient for me here to sketch in a general way the two figures of passion, one in essence, but rendered so variform by the two different natures called Adam and Eve.

Listen to two spontaneous cries, uttered by two nations very distant and well-nigh uncivilized, and you will find the first lines of a physiology of the sexual characters of love. The Munda-Kols of Chota Nagpur have some popular songs which express the psychical difference between man and woman. The women sing:

> "Singbonga from the beginning has made us smaller than you, therefore we obey you. Even if it were not so and from the beginning we had overburdened you with work, still we would not be your equals. To you God has given with two hands, to us with one; and for this we do not plough the ground."

And the men sing to the women:

> "As God has given us with two hands, so has He made us bigger than you. Have we made ourselves big? He

Himself has divided us into big and small. If you do not obey now the word of man, you certainly disobey the word of God. He himself has made us bigger than you."

And flying to a very distant land, we find a Kabyle song, in which a chorus of young women alternates with a chorus of sturdy youths.

The women: "Let him who wants to be loved by a woman march with his weapons; let him put the butt-end of the gun to his cheek and cry: 'Come to me, O maidens!'"

The men: "You do well to love us. God sends us war and we will die, and keep at least the memory of the happiness that you have given us."

Rising from the Munda-Kols and the Kabyles to the higher and more civilized races, we always find, however, an echo of this wild cry of nature, in which man proclaims his strength or imposes it, and woman acquiesces in or invokes it. Hence the very unequal part of joys and sorrows, of rights and duties, which man allows his companion in the world of love; hence an ever increasing usurpation of joys and rights by the strong as we descend to the lower strata of humanity; hence civilized nations continually struggling to divide good and evil in a more equitable proportion between the two sexes, which still so unfairly share light and darkness, joys and sorrows.

Where muscular strength is the criterion of hierarchies, where it constitutes the first of human forces, the difference between man and woman in the rights and joys of love is immense, and woman becomes little more than a domestic animal which is bought, sold or killed according to the necessity of the moment. Setting civilization aside, polygamy exists where morality is uncertain and lust is ardent; and woman, guarded as a treasure of voluptuousness, falls morally lower than in a wandering tribe of nude but monogamous savages, where woman is the companion of the labors and joys of man. For this, perhaps, Solomon used to cry

out in his harem: "And who will find me a strong woman?" Among us, also, woman does not play in love the part assigned to her by nature; and here also she can without scruple class herself among the oppressed who await their "jacquerie" or their constitution; here also she is a legitimate pretender who, by right or might, will have some day to conquer her place in the sun.

But I will speak of rights in another chapter; here we must remain within the confines of physiology, which still is, or should be, the legitimate mother of every human legislation. If anthropology should put in our hands all the moral and intellectual elements which separate man from woman, then science could most safely establish in its laws and customs the right place for each sex, without any danger of usurpation, abuse or imposition from any quarter.

Nature has given woman the greatest part of love, and if this difference could be expressed with figures, I would say that we were allotted one fifth, or one fourth at most, of love's territory. Only a woman could write Mme. de Staël's sublime words: "Undoubtedly, in the mysteries of nature, to love and still to love is what we have retained of our celestial inheritance." Neither civilization in any of its most varied phases, nor customs in their numberless forms, nor impositions of tyrants, nor power of genius could alter this immutable law. In the rank and fetid hut of the Eskimo, or in the palace of the prince, woman gives all of herself to man, first as daughter, then as lover, as wife, as mother. She is the great placenta of human beings, the bosom from which we draw blood, voluptuousness, love, every delight of our soul, every heat that warms us. Woe to us, if we should poison the source of human life with a pseudo-education; woe to us, if we should deny Eve the most sacred of rights! For woman, love is the first, the uppermost necessity, and all her organism and her psychology are softened and moulded by the influence of love. Van Helmont said too rudely, *"Tota mulier in utero,"* but thinkers of all epochs applauded the aphorism of the Dutch physician. Woman physically desires for long time; she

possesses for long time and can enjoy her conquest every day, every hour, and turn it into a warm and scented atmosphere in which she lives as in a nest; woman nurses in her bosom an angel who always ardently desires and who does not quench in her the affection for her companion; she moulds the man, nourishes and caresses him, and as the years pass she sees herself, her flesh, her loves transformed into a group of little angels who dance around her, who are bits of her heart, petals of a rose fallen from the flower of her beauty, all calling her "mother," which has the meaning of "placenta of life." From the ardent embrace of the man whom she loves she flits to the endearments of her little children; voluptuousness does not fatigue, nor ardor wither, nor passion weary her; she is all, from her hair to her feet, imbued with love, the fluid that flows in her through every vein and moistens every fiber; so that when she is deprived of it she is like the tree shattered by the hurricane and which sees every leaf wither, every flower fall. The love of man is a lightning that flashes, thunders and vanishes; the love of woman is a ray of sun which, slow and warm, penetrates her heart and fecundates her; and she absorbs it, languidly and voluptuously, and every little root of her sentiments, her joys, her thoughts imbibes and feasts upon it; so that, even after the sun has disappeared, its fruitful rays remain, hidden in the earth which it has warmed.

Many have contradicted my opinion, which I expressed several years ago in my "Physiology of Pleasure," that woman has received from nature a larger cup to drink at the inexhaustible spring of the voluptuousness of love; and inasmuch as joy cannot be measured or weighed yet, the problem must wait for its solution a long time still. Nobody, however, can deny that, lasciviousness and sensibility being equal in both sexes, Eve can thirst much longer than man, and, without experiencing fatigue, realize the happy dream of a voluptuousness which, changing its form, is eternally renewed. But while for many men voluptuousness is all that is in love, for a woman, be she the most libertine among the sensual women, it is only a sweet episode. And if you do

not believe such a bold assertion, send heralds through the whole civilized world and assemble all those, men and women, who can love and invite them to a singular love tournament; ask them whether they would accept an eternal and most faithful love without voluptuousness in exchange for voluptuousness without love. For every hundred women who will vote for love, ten, perhaps five, men will decide for the sublime refusal of the embrace.

O you, all of you who have studied the heart of woman in the most abject places and believe that you are making your companion happy because you give her luxuriousness and gold and dresses, remember that woman wants to love above all, to be warmed by the spirit of man, to lean all upon the faithful arm of man, to feel that she is needed by a companion of whom she wants to be proud; she wants to be the first for someone. You may behold a woman unhappy amid the splendors of luxury, caressed by the sweet affection of a husband, satisfied in all her desires; and you may see another happy in poverty, amid the storms of life, oppressed by the brutal whims of a lover. "Mysteries of the heart," you say. "A very natural thing," I say. The first woman does not love her husband; the second loves her lover. This is another essential difference between man's and woman's loves: man wants to be loved; woman wants, above all, to love. The sentiment which burns in her is more active, more expansive than in man. Little she demands of her companion, because she is too rich and her affection is too strong to need the support of self-esteem to fight the battles of life. Certain it is that perfect love is the sum of these two most beautiful things, "I love—I am loved"; but often woman is satisfied when able to exclaim, "I love," while man needs only to expand his chest and say, "I am loved."

Do not ask woman why she loves. She can love such ugly, poor, deformed creatures as to astonish and horrify us. If that creature can only be hers, she will know how to adorn him with the flowers of imagination, illumine him with the brilliant light which comes from her heart. When woman loves she almost never doubts of being loved. Has Cæsar

ever doubted of winning a battle? Has Napoleon ever doubted of being immortal? So it is with woman's love; she will creep like a reptile at the feet of her companion, or roar like a lion which wants what it wants; she will be a pet rabbit caressed in the bosom of a child, or an eagle that carries aloft the prey in its claws; but her love will be reciprocated. The ardent faith of the neophyte, the proud faith of infallibility, the immeasurable arrogance of the fortunate conqueror, are virtues that are more frequently found in woman's loves, more rarely in man's.

In order to love, woman needs only find talent, strength and even crime in the man she wants to have for herself; she can love the ugliest, most wicked, most deformed of men. She elevates every man she touches; she believes she can heat even the ice. Man loves the beautiful above all and pardons everything else; man often lowers even the highest loves. Woman carries even luxuriousness aloft into the big regions of sentiment; man lowers even affection into the mire of lasciviousness. Pardon my cynical phrase, but do not reject it, because it is too true: man in his loves is more of a brute than of an angel; woman is more of an angel than of a human being.

An essay on the comparative psychology of love cannot be written unless based upon a complete physiology of the two sexes. Every thought, every word, every gesture of man or woman in love receives the imprint of the sex; and when the characters are inverted a most disgusting spectacle takes place and we behold a caricature, a monster, or even a crime. At times, however, women of manly inclinations love manly, and men of docile disposition manifest in their loves sublime tenderness, softness and sentiments which should be found in woman only. We are again in the domain of pathology, but the psychical forms may, from the unusual combination of figures and strange coloring, derive an esthetic element which astonishes us and invites us to meditation.

However variform the sexual elements of love may be, our modern civilization is stained by a most heinous sin because we allow woman, who is the true and great priestess of love,

but a small tribute and a trivial part. We have for ourselves ambition, glory, science, the morbid thirst for gain; we have granted to man all the energies of sentiment, all the conquests of genius, all the victories of passion; to woman we have refused every nourishment of heart and thought, representing to her that she must only love. After having robbed her of nearly every field of human activity, we have left the garden of love to her as her only possession, her only solace. And when this poor prisoner, with all the ardent curiosity of her nature, wished to pick the flowers and the scented herbs of her garden, when she proceeded to cultivate the garden in her own way, we interfered there, too, setting up the posters of our restrictive regulations and erecting the fences of our laws: "That flower-bed is reserved; that flower must not be picked. No thoroughfare." The selection of the plants to cultivate must also be made by us,—by us, who possess the orchard and the field, the meadow and the forest, the ice-fields of the Alps and the water of the ocean. Thus we have a woman slave who murmurs and conspires against us; thus we have made sterile and barren the garden where a proud and noble lady would have splendidly received us, where we could rest from our glorious labors; thus, instead of being welcomed by a lady of our station, in gilded halls, brilliantly decorated with gems, we have a woman prisoner or slave who reclines her head on our knees and weeps. We have measured the bread and wine of her life as the jailer does with the thief; and, tyrants in love as well, we have kept the lion's share both in voluptuousness and in the free choice of the sovereign affection. But every injustice must be paid for, just as the equilibrium is reëstablished every time it has been disturbed; and the continual deceptions, only too well justified, of our slaves, seraglio conspiracies and palace plots, are every day evidence that we erect upon a false foundation the edifice of family, and loudly proclaim that it will soon be necessary to give woman what belongs to her, the free choice of loves, the equality of rights in the affections as well as in the family.

CHAPTER XV

LOVE AND AGE

In studying the morning crepuscules of Love, we have involuntarily outlined the first phases of Love. We have seen him timid and spasmodic, exerting himself between the swaddling clothes of infancy and the first weapons of arrogant youth, like a boy warrior armed with a wooden sword and a pop-gun. During the age of adolescence this sovereign affection shows the most sublime puerilities, the maddest hysterias, the most fanciful vows of an infinite without limits of time or space. Side by side with the most ideal aspirations we find, however, the impetuous and automatic outbreaking of the first lusty actions; and a youthful imagination, inflaming the first fevers of lust, agitates and shakes the tender and fragile organism. Happy those who in the first storms of life find a friendly hand as a guide and solace to preserve them from thousands of dangers which threaten health and morality at the same time.

The first, impatient acts of lust in adolescence are generally followed in elect natures by a period of reaction, during which heroic vows of chastity are made together with extraordinary endeavors to learn to hate woman. Just at that time, in the diary of the boy who is about to become a man, we may read these vows and aspirations for chastity which I literally reproduce here for you:

"... Tremendous dilemma of life; the cosmos less the woman—the woman less the cosmos."

"I have been able to pass an entire day without embracing a woman and without any fervid aspiration for

her; and yet I have passed a very happy day! Try and do without the evil-born race of Eve, for all time."

"I took a seat near a Creole young lady and found her beautiful, inebriating, voluptuous. I thought of a paradise of delights in looking at her, and wavered. The most Creole embrace in the world, however, is not worth the cosmic synthesis as I have conceived it and as I will expose it to men."

"No pleasure is shorter than the erotic delirium; no sacrifice more fruitful of useful consequences than the disdain for this voluptuousness."

"Instinct, with the fury of its power, is for you the outward manifestation of pleasure in its most attractive aspect; it is only a faculty of yours, and tends to draw into its whirlpool all your activity.

"It is only one of your faculties and that which you have in common with the lowest creatures at the bottom of the series of creation, and this faculty wants to be the first; the first and only for a few moments; but in these moments the least noble of your powers wants to, and can, take a great part of yourself, of your *ego*. It is a sovereign who rules only for a few seconds, but who has power enough during the period of his reign to destroy half of the state and leave his throne upon a heap of ruins, firebrands and ashes; it is easy to destroy, but from a mass of ruins and ashes to rebuild a state is a hopeless task."

These few expressions are but the thousandth reproduction of a psychical phenomenon which is reiterated in all men when they pass from the threshold of adolescence into the gardens of youth. An historical fact and a proverb embodied this truth in two great monuments: in the Council of Trent those who voted for celibacy were the youngest priests; and the French language has a proverb which says: "If youth but knew; could age but do!"—a vote and a

proverb deserving a volume of meditations, and springing forth from the deepest roots of the human heart.

Exuberance of forces prepares us for the battle; but, at the same time, it leaves us calm and serene, because true force is always calm. Rarely a braggart is strong, and a frequent intimation of one's own energy is nearly always a symptom of decline and weakness. The invalid who fears death often says that he feels very well, even before being asked about his health, and endeavors to delude himself and others with respect to the danger that threatens him.

A young man is, in love, always more timid than an adult or an old man; and this fact originates from so many and mysterious causes as to occur in many animals as well. Birds, among others, the older they are, the quicker they go at their amorous undertaking. A young man, however deep his love may be, still trembles. He is a ripe and fragrant fruit, but the rude contacts of the gardener and the store have not deprived him yet of his untouched varnish. He has foregone the useless and too unequal struggles against love and flung himself into its arms; but he still trembles when the currents of the god pass through his body and cause his nerves to vibrate. He is a priest initiated into the mysteries of the temple, but still trembling when in the *sanctum sanctorum,* and a gentle and sublime timidity tempers in him the too virile expression of strength. Before our eyes we have one of the most sublime pictures of the moral world: the apex of beauty without the mannerism of pride, the maximum of strength without a shadow of convulsion; an ever lively force, a serene but definite energy, ready to spring, ready for action and reaction.

A young man with a good physical constitution belongs entirely to love, and love is the property of youth. All the energies of sentiment, all the powers of thought at that age are moulded by that sovereign affection, which absorbs and carries away everything into its hot and turbulent whirlpools. He is less than a eunuch who does not love at twenty, because even a eunuch can love, and there is an amorous sterility which has its seat in the brain and in the heart, and

which is more humiliating than any mutilation of organs, than any lack of functions. If, at twenty, a man does not encounter a woman in the social world, he loves the picture or statue of a woman, he loves the heroine of a story or of a poem, and the young girl adores the angels whose wings flutter around her virginal bed.

At twenty, one should possess the physical energy to love a hundred women, and even the most modest maiden finds in the air, at every step, a spark darting from her contact with a man. Notwithstanding, however, a gigantic and fruitful possibility of polygamy, man and woman are, in their robust youth, essentially monogamous, and in their most senseless idolatries they are still monotheists. One god, one temple, one religion only. One must be born with singular perversity to be polygamous from the first steps in love, and the young girl who already loves more than one man at a time must have been conceived in a bawdy-house by the kneading of the blood and the flesh of a bacchante.

Yet against this virtuous, energetic, holy monogamy there rise on all sides enormous obstacles; formidable adversaries move against it from every quarter, opposing the first steps. Adam has found his Eve; Eve has seen her Adam; but in the embrace of those two lovers, how many enemies, how many barriers, how many abysses! Adam loves Eve; Eve loves Adam; what can be more simple, what affinity more intense, what affection more inevitable than their union? Still before they can embrace each other, these two unfortunate creatures must ask permission of prejudice, hypocrisy, conventionalities, hygiene, morality, religion, and above all, finance; and there is scarcely one chance out of a hundred that the answer will be a "yes" from all these superior authorities that have the right of vetoing their affection. The nightingale has seen and loved his modest companion; in the deep shadow of a mysterious alder he has sung to her his tenderest song and infused his love into her. Today they sleep, happy in their love, and tomorrow they will find flexuous branches and soft moss to weave their nest. No need of civil matrimony, of religious matrimony, of

financial matrimony. But woe to the man who shall rely upon nature to have his nest prepared! The morrow of his loves would be cursed by hunger; and scrofula and rachitis would kill his children, born of a union which lacked the consent of finance.

From the clash of two contrary forces there arises a decomposition of movements, a transformation of energies; and this phenomenon occurs in love when, pure, virginal, powerful and hardly issued from the hot bosom of nature, it finds the sharp rocks of social obstacles, and, like a wave, breaks against them, raises a mass of foam and withdraws dragging away a congeries of stones, splinters and mud scattered by the turbulent clashing of so many forces and resistances. Would fortune that in that first shock love should suffer nothing but sorrow! Tears have blessed thousands of loves and bathed them in a sweet dew; very few have they killed. But in the dashing of the first love against the cruel rock of social resistances many new forces, all of them ruthless, spring from the decomposition of the two contrary motions, and a thousand compromises with conscience stain in its swaddling clothes the new-born love, humiliating it under the shame of an original sin.

The very first compromise with his own conscience on the part of a pure and enamored youth, when prevented by society from being monogamous, is that of decomposing love into sentiment and voluptuousness; thus he strives to preserve his heart pure and to erect one temple only, while sacrifices are offered to lust on the hundred altars of the wandering Venus.

And still this decomposition of love seems to the most refined and most virtuous lovers a very wise move, a miracle of art, the ideal of morality coupled with the most urgent needs of a heart and senses; and after a few skirmishes and lamentations every one adapts himself to this compromise and tries to make himself as comfortable as possible, as though in an uncomfortable carriage in which one must journey for a long time. The most considerate, the most virtuous lovers, however, are continually looking forward to

the fortunate day when all hypocrisy will be eliminated and physical and moral loves united will give them the right to build a nest in which sentiment and voluptuousness will keep faithful company. And in the meantime we just go on between a reticence and a lie; the heart to the wife of another, the body to the courtesan.

Those young men who adapt themselves too easily to this ignominious and degrading compromise with their conscience are cruelly punished for their crime, since they will not know the richest and most splendid treasures of youthful love. Do not lie, do not betray; do not seek your love in the mire, but in the sky; and then abandon your heart and senses to the wave that carries you to paradise. Inhale all the perfumes, pick all the flowers of a garden over which no winter breeze ever blows, and where for every petal that falls a hundred new corollas blossom. Be rich, be recklessly rich; be gods at least once in your life: nature concedes a day of spring even to the most miserable creature and weaves a garland on the head of the lowliest of men. Remember, there is no coffer in which an hour of sunlight can be kept, no artifice of chemical science that can preserve a blooming rose.

The fortunate young man who has not subjected his love to the process of decomposition we have described loves ardently, recklessly, splendidly. His love is a sunny day in May, without clouds, without chills, without sorrows; it is a feast where weariness, fatigue and delusions are unknown. He lives because he loves, and he loves because he lives. He burns his incense to the goddess, but he is chaste and knows very little of lasciviousness. He is sometimes so pure as to call a blush on the face of a woman who, being in her thirties, already loves too knowingly. He neither measures nor weighs; and who has ever dared to reduce to a mathematical formula the force of a thunderbolt or the kilogrammeters of an earthquake? And the loves of a young man are thunderbolts or earthquakes. A young man is not very jealous; he is less so, in any case, than the adult and the old; he is too

confident, too happy to doubt; and, besides, he has no time! His lips are wreathed in a perpetual smile; a golden ray of sunlight rests on his brow like a halo of bliss. There is no tomorrow for him except under the form of a continuation of the happiness of today; he does not remember the past, and in good faith believes himself to have always loved his goddess, even when he did not know her. He believes in inborn loves, as the philosopher of old used to believe in congenital ideas. O happy youth!

If the young man is the most powerful, the most ardent lover, the adult is the most skillful. The use and abuse of life have somewhat dulled his spirit, almost extinguished the flames of passion; but no excessive impatience, no needless timidity, no sudden explosions of desire oppose any obstacle to the blissful perfection of his loves. He loves with shrewdness, with passion, with a most subtle art; he is a hundred times more libertine than the youth, but also more delicate, richer in exquisite tastes belonging to the world of thought. The youthful lover is a nude and often ferocious savage; the adult has become civilized from long experience and is clothed with the blandishments of his art. His most spontaneous sympathies are for unripe fruit, for the flowers still enclosed within the untouched and thorny calyx of innocence and ignorance; but he likes to love the independent woman as well, the widow and the matron; he is essentially eclectic. His joys are scarcer than in the days of youth, but they are more precious, because rendered more savory by a certain economy almost verging on avarice. He knows that his hours are numbered and follows with a caress every coin he spends; before parting with it, he bestows upon it a look of affection and regret. Rich in memories, but poor in hopes, he concentrates all his cares, patience and attention on the present. He is the ablest, the wisest master of love; and when health and freshness of heart do not desert him, he can awaken ardent and lasting passions and preserve them for a long time. Woman much less than man is bent on inquiring about white hair and birth certificates; and if she

only feels that she is loved deeply and ardently, she willingly forgets half a score of years, and more, of the age of her companion.

In the love of the adult man for the young woman one feels always a benevolent and sympathetic protection, an almost paternal affection, full of tenderness and generous impulses. This characteristic tends to deprive mature love of some of the warmest and most voluptuous expansions, to cool down the volcanic explosions of youthful love; but the paternal affection, which might easily tend to become authority and eliminate the perfect equality between the two lovers, is tempered in adult man by a deep and hidden mistrust of himself.

The young man asks for love on his knees, but knows that he is legitimately entitled to it, and often from the humble position of a beggar of alms, prostrated in the dust, he leaps to his feet, demanding with the force of beauty, genius, passion, that which he could not obtain by humility. A mature man, on the contrary, has lost many rights, and his requests are made with greater constraint, with a reserve full of grace and delicacy; he often implores with a tenderness so ardent and a tone so supplicatory that it is difficult to answer with a refusal. The continual alternation of an authority that teaches and an authority that implores gives the adult love the most characteristic hue, the most conspicuous mark. And when poor nature, medicated by art, has succeeded in attaining love, the precious affection firmly fixes itself on it and thrusts its roots into the deepest recesses of the heart. The adult has tenacious passions, and none is more faithful in love than he; often, conditions being equal, he is the best husband, and not only through egotism does the bridegroom seek a bride a few years younger than himself. Man grows old later than woman, and two ignorant and very young people seldom wed without exposing themselves to the most serious dangers.

The woman of thirty, also, loves with modesty, with deep tenderness, with religious fidelity, with avaricious sagacity.

The man who is growing old is the trunk of a tree on

which every day a branch withers, and from which every gust of wind detaches a handful of yellow leaves. When the entire tree is dead, then upon the ruins of love rises an implacable hatred for those who love and are loved; the cruel domestic inquisitions and a posthumous, ridiculous ostentation of forced continence or mummified modesty will then poison the existence of the intolerant old man, who avenges himself upon the young people for his misfortune in not being longer able to love. It is an inexorable law which condemns those old men to mystic and wrathful meditations, because in all times and in all countries the last spark of lust serves to light the bilious taper on the altar of superstition. Most unfortunate is the poor young girl who must have as a confidante of her first loves an irascible and bigoted old woman, to whom love is a synonym of lechery and affection a sin. Less monstrous and less cruel is the deformity of a Chinese foot than the contortions which a youthful love must undergo in the hooked and yellow clutches of intolerant bigotry.

Man, however, is a tree so robust and vigorous that it rarely dies all at once, and in the old man there often remains flourishing the only branch of lust. It is then that the economy of the adult turns into real avarice, lust becomes lasciviousness, and love assumes unheard-of forms, worthy of Tiberius and Caligula. The lust of the old man, warmed by the stifling atmosphere of vice, is like a mushroom produced by the fetid artifices of horticulture and bears fruits which give out in the distance the stench of the manure in which they were raised. Nor can the name of love be given to those lusts, but they should be given that of erotic mercature, of prostitution of innocence to the calculus of probability of life, or to the expectation of an inheritance. And yet some powerful lovers maintain ghosts of desire until their extreme decrepitude and, like eels, go on rubbing their frothy paunches in the hot mire of the lowest social strata; to their last breath, with their ossified hands they strip of leaves the rosebushes and purchase at fabulous prices an "I love you" icier than snow, more deceitful than Tartufe.

The man of high type, too, can love until old age; but then, lust being spent, every right of conquest having been abandoned, love soars to the highest spheres of the ideal world and becomes a sublime contemplation of feminine beauty. Whether before the maiden and heroic greatness of Joan of Arc, or the startling sensuality of the statue of Phryne by Barzaghi, hearing the lively prattling of a girl of fourteen or at the side of a calm and plump matron, even a venerable old man, without any offense in words or acts, feels moved; and, perhaps, under the childlike or compassionate caresses of a woman, his eyes will fill with tears and, if he is a believer, he will invoke the benedictions of Heaven on the most beautiful half of the human family.

If even the old man can love a young woman, the old woman also can love a young man; but their love should be a serene contemplation of the beautiful, a suave remembrance of joys possessed for a long time and ardent aspirations for an ideal which is ever loved, because it is never attained. Even the white-haired old man can, without offending the modesty of her who cannot be his any more, caress with paternal affection the curls of Eve, adore in her the most splendid manifestation of the esthetic forces of nature, warm his cold imagination again at the ardent fire of others' loves; and, without envy and without regrets, but with sweet satisfaction he can say: "I, too, have done my duty; do yours now. I, too, have loved without sowing the seeds of remorse for my old age; try you, and follow my example!"

CHAPTER XVI

LOVE IN RELATION TO TEMPERAMENTS—OF THE WAYS OF LOVING

I SHALL not repeat in these pages for the hundredth time the criticism of temperaments as they were described by the ancient schools, and which I have expounded in many of my works, small and large. Not everybody has accepted my standards of classification, but all agree with me in the belief that temperaments have had their time, and that hygiene, medicine, psychology await from the progress of modern physiology the elements to determine, as science requires, the physical and moral characteristics of a human individual. Against this impotency of modern physiology I have protested, changing the name of "temperament" to that of "individual constitution": innocent revenge of all men who, when powerless to change a thing, satisfy their rage by changing its name.

Every man loves in his own way and, as we bring to love the greatest possible tribute of psychical elements, it follows that human loves differ more than hatreds, more than the manners of eating, of motion, of will. The lower we descend from the branches to the trunk, the more human elements resemble each other; the higher we ascend to the loftiest branches of the tree, the more the elements diverge and differ. Ask a woman of easy virtue, or a Don Juan, how many are the methods of loving, and they both not only will answer that every one loves in a different manner, but will add that the manners themselves are so extraordinarily different that calling all these most variform ways of loving by the one name of the same sentiment excites repugnance.

It is true that some authors have amused themselves by

describing a "sanguine love," a "nervous love," a "lymphatic love," a "hepatic love"; but these pictures are innocent pastimes, arabesques traced on the epidermis of human nature, and the schools of psychology and literature, which succeed each other, so completely obliterate these arabesques that not the least trace of them is left. Even when, instead of the caricatures of temperaments, we should succeed in delineating a true family of human constitutions, it would be very difficult to class under it all forms of love. The thousands and thousands of color cases of the Roman mosaic-maker are sufficient to classify the innumerable tints that an expert eye succeeds in discerning; but who will give me a palette so gigantic that I may spread on it all the polychromic mixtures, all the simple and compound colors, all the proteiform iridescences offered by the human light when it strikes the powerful prism of love?

The question as to the quantity of love which an individual may feel is the easiest to solve; but it is also one of the most important. In every psychological problem there is an element of quantity; and as it is the simplest, it is also the most visible. It is, I would almost say, the skeleton of the phenomenon and we should grasp it eagerly, as the thread which guides us through the labyrinth of these studies.

Many men, even if possessing a lofty mind and a gentle heart, have asked themselves seriously, and more than once, whether they were capable of loving, unacquainted as they were with all that world of mysteries and passions which they found described in many books and heard from the mouths of some enamored friends. To those men my book, although I have striven to contain it within the limits of a physiological study, may seem an exaggeration, a caricature of nature. Now, all those men are petty and weak lovers. To them love is an intermittent prurience that begins at eighteen years and ends, perhaps, at forty, or fifty at the latest; a prurience that stands somewhere between pleasure and bother and which can be morally cured by only one medicine, woman. This medicine, so they say, is sometimes worse than the disease, and it is necessary to reflect at length

and with great care whether preference should be given to that prurience which poets call "love," or to that other load which naturalists call "the female of man" and the courteous dictionaries "woman." When these eunuchs of the sentiment of love prefer the woman, they may find that this animated object, so like ourselves, is also tolerably pleasing and congenial, and a sweet and tender habit of benevolence may tie them to this companion whom they love, and truly love, in their own way, that is, calmly, prudently, suavely. These unhappy creatures have more than one reason to ask of themselves whether what they feel is love, and a thousand reasons to inquire of true lovers: "But tell me now, will you explain to me what this love is!" The moon radiates heat; frogs, too, develop heat: well, then, these gentlemen, too, do love!

Peaceful love, petty or cold love (call it what you will) does not exclusively belong to the male; but, on the contrary, it offers, although more rarely, its most perfect forms in woman. Man, however weak a lover he may be, cannot renounce the mission of sex, which compels him to attack, assault, declare that war which must lead him to conquest. Woman, on the contrary, if she be born a *eunuch,* need not attack her companion in the slightest way; she can, if she so wishes, avoid the trouble of directing her gaze toward her lover or opening her lips to say "yes." To let herself be loved will be enough. How many romantic delights in these few words! To let herself be loved; to leave to others every labor of conquered timidity, of injured modesty; every strategy, every tactic of moral violence; to let the others struggle and reserve for herself alone the voluptuousness of slightly opening the door or even letting others open it! To let herself be loved! What esthetic, heavenly beatitude, what voluptuousness of soft undulations and carnal prurience, what wonderful warmth of sweet caresses! And, then, no responsibility for the future of a passion which has never been confessed; no storm; a calm lake without tempest, without tides. And if the heart, full of sentiment, would take the liberty of a restless throb, to apply then and there

a cataplasm to bring it back to its duty, and modesty to justify the perpetual ice, and virtue to apologize for the absence of aroma. Oh, why did not heaven make us out of this blessed, soft, sweet paste? Oh, why can we not reduce love to a problem of hygiene and régime?

From this zero of the amatory scale we gradually rise to the maximum degree of the pyrometer, where every metal is melted and volatilized and the entire human organism is transformed into a red and incandescent vapor that burns everything it touches. There are tremendous lovers, who have loved before they were men, who will love, too, when they are men no longer; there are women who have loved, perhaps, since they were closed in the maternal womb, and will love even the sexton who will nail down the cover on the cold coffin which contains their morbid flesh; there are men and women in whom every affection takes a sensual form and love absorbs them like a sponge born, grown and dead in the saline depths of a tropical sea. Having neither time nor patience to wait, they love the first comer, to whom they lend their affections and their imagination; then, discouraged but not wearied, they love the next comer and, always loving more than they are loved, they remain with their thirst forever unquenched. Happy they are when they succeed, although rarely, in being satisfied with consecutive loves; but oftener they precipitate quickly into polygamy, where, through sophisms, reticences and compromises with conscience, they love this one with the heart, that other one with the mind, and all of them with the senses. They have a *first* love, an *only* love, a *true* love; but too frequently they forget the names of such loves and use them to designate too many different lovers, and, like the octopus, they stretch forth their numerous, avid, sucking arms to reach the hot, succulent flesh of the feminine cosmos. Among these polygamists there are some who love only with the heart, others only with the senses; while to a few giants nature concedes the sad gift of a twofold thirst for affection and voluptuousness.

Between these two poles, which mark the extreme degrees

of amatory intensity, plods the innumerable mass of those men who are neither Don Juans nor chaste Josephs; the numberless women who are neither Messalinas nor Joans of Arc.

Besides the variform force of amorous needs, the sentiment which we are now studying together assumes a different character, according to the passion which predominates in the individual and by which love is marked as proud, humble, egotistical, vain, furious, jealous. And around these binary compounds of love and pride, of love and egotism, of love and vanity, there are grouped many other minor elements, which, although with less energetic affinity, still form a homogeneous whole that might be called a "temperament of love" or a "constitutional form of love." I shall try to sketch some of them from nature.

Tender Love.—This love is more frequently felt by men of mild and gentle character; it has shaded outlines and little relief. Emotion surprises them for the slightest cause; tears are always ready to gush forth at the first impulse of joy or sorrow; a perennial compassion and an inexhaustible tenderness drown declarations of love, ardors of voluptuousness and outbursts of affection in a most sweet sea of milk and honey. Tender love is suppliant, lachrymose and faithful; it often touches the boundaries of sensual love, but never enters that sea under full sail. It is a love that is frequently constant and trustworthy, almost as immutable as an old and serene friendship; it has, however, a tendency to being disconsolate and mournful, if not querulous, and it sighs, sobs or weeps too often. Nevertheless, it is capable of wonderful expansiveness which, however interminable, is pregnant with intense joy and sweet solace and predisposes us to universal benevolence, to philanthropy, to forgiveness. It is a Christian, evangelical love that delights more in a caress than in a kiss, and in lingering kisses more than in sudden battles. Its most esthetic forms are found in the woman, whom we readily exculpate from a certain weakness and who may even swoon without making herself ridiculous.

Persons with fair complexion, Germans and lymphatic creatures love in this way.

Contemplative Love.—A high, esthetic sense, an irresistible tendency to inertness and limited genital needs constitute the soil in which germinate and grow the various forms of contemplative love. It is a lofty love—too lofty; it has something of the mystic and the supernatural; the lover places his idol very high and prostrates himself before it, lavishing upon it every kind of adoration and incense. Contemplative love is situated in the anterior lobes of the brain; it affects but slightly the somber depths of the heart and hardly skims over the warm wave of voluptuousness; it lives on ecstasies and contemplations and, making of the creature it loves a god or a goddess, it forgets too frequently that the god comprehends a human male, the goddess a human female. This sublime forgetfulness makes of this love the greatest cuckold ever known, because nature can neither be forgotten nor offended with impunity; and while one adores and is absorbed in admiration in the temple, the warlike and rapacious love profanes the tabernacle and carries off the god. Contemplative love lives on the frontiers of pathology, and properly belongs to Arcadic, fanatic and mystic persons. Disillusioned and betrayed, they accuse love of simony and falsehood, when they themselves are only too guilty of having caused their own sorrows and their own bitter disappointments.

Sensual Love.—This is one of the most ardent, most inebriating, most tenacious of loves, because it springs from the most fruitful and spontaneous source of sensual affections. It is the most sincere and most powerful of loves, because it satisfies one of the most natural and most irresistible needs of man; but its foundation rests on a shifting ground: beauty; and its ardors are indicated by too deep a note: desire. It never lies; it does not wrap itself in the hundred cloaks of amorous hypocrisy, but is nude, entirely nude and, in its nudity, often modest. Brazen or tender,

insatiable or satisfied, rash to the point of insolence, it is, however, always itself: the tremendous attraction of two great and opposite organic units; a burning thirst that seeks the cool water of the Alpine spring; the most vigorous clash of the two most gigantic forces in the world of the living. From voluptuousness to voluptuousness, if youthful strength does not accompany it, it usually slides into lasciviousness, where it sinks deeper each day that passes and with the decline of each force; and down, down it plunges until it reaches the filth of domestic libertinism or that of the wandering Venus. It is inexhaustible in discoveries and inventions, indefatigable in voluptuousness; it is also a sublime artist; it may emit high musical notes of tenderness and show warm and fascinating tints. Born in the lowest depths of the animal man, it rarely rises to the high spheres of the ideal and knows no dignity, no delicacy, no heroism; rather, it is often suppliant to the point of baseness, impure to nausea. It accepts a bone to gnaw, just as it accepts voluptuousness without love. It does not matter to sensual love whether voluptuousness is reached by the sole moral path of love, but it accepts it also through this way, it seeks it by all possible ways. And it conquers, steals, buys love; it goes even so far as to borrow it, to commit forgery, provided it gets it. Let its insatiable prurience be but appeased and sensual love will act as mediator or pander for the loves of others, become usurer, thief and forger with the same callousness. This love is generally masculine: in women, even licentiousness always dons a splendid robe of sentiment and hides its too insolent nudity.

Ferocious Love.—Perhaps the term which is applied to this love is stronger than it should be; but in painting a psychical picture one is irresistibly inclined to exaggerate the coloring or the outlines and give the subject more relief than it has in nature. Abnormal development of the sense of ownership, amplified by conceit and joined to a certain impetuosity of character: such is the most natural source of all those violent loves which I class under the common name

of "ferocious love." Its birth is nearly always like the eruption of a volcano and accompanied by so many storms and fits of affection and such clashing of energies that one would suppose that, instead of a love, a hatred had come into existence. And this original sin follows it through life, and ends only with death. We see this love distribute handshakes with such strength that we say they are tetanic convulsions, kisses that seem bites, embraces that look like homicides; and we behold it as a tyrant without jealousy, a fury without anger, insatiable even after possession, because voluptuousness does not calm nor fidelity always satisfy it. Venus triumphant and not disarmed would represent this love in all the sublime greatness of its forces. If kindness of habits or the patient file of education does not succeed in smoothing its angles, it often becomes rugged and even brutal. So must have loved our most remote ancestors of the caves and the palisades, who continuously bathed in the blood of hunt and war and stained their hands with blood in love as well, as woman also was the prey belonging to the strongest and most audacious. As it is easy to imagine, man generally is the one who loves ferociously; but woman, too, occasionally feels this cruel form of love; and the more attached she is to her lover, the more she torments him and the deeper she plunges the claws of her passion into the depths of his body to feel its heat and to say with voluptuous fury: "This, too, is mine!"

Proud Love.—This form is a binary combination of one part of love and ten parts of self-love. When proud love is satisfied, when it is in all the pomp of its happiness, it may appear as a pure, great, sublime love; but as soon as self-love suffers a sting it froths and swells like a snail or a basilisk and shows the dual nature of its energy in all its nudity. Even in the few moments when this affection is entirely happy, it never betokens it nor does it abandon itself to an unrestrained confession of beatitude or bliss, for the same reason that the rustic never admits that he admires new and great things. Proud love thinks more of being loved than

of loving; it always speaks of rights and often does not know of duties. Rich in exactions and poor in consideration, it swells up with pride if fortunate, and murmurs at the slightest suspicion; it is the most jealous of loves and among the most unhappy, among the poorest in sweet abandonments and ingenuous voluptuousness. Even in the most secret intimacy it never unfolds its thoughts for fear of ridicule or of spoiling a crease of the starched paludament in which it has wrapped itself; it is never the first to concede a caress, but expects it as a right and a duty. It is a love which, to be approached, requires infinite attentions, ceremonies, formalities; which quickly becomes tiresome and often disgusting. It exacts fidelity, not as a dear reciprocation of affection, but as a right of its own dignity, and easily pardons such sins as the world does not become aware of. It is a sterile, barren, sickly love.

Excoriated Love.—Because of its origins, this form of love is often confounded with the preceding; but it is still more unhappy and rightfully belongs to the pathology of the heart. It is a love that can be sincere, tender and passionate; but it is so irritable and such a grumbler that a mosquito would annoy it and a pebble in its path cause it to cry against misfortune and treachery. Like the Epicurean of old, it cannot sleep unless a folded rose-leaf is placed in its bed. It also seeks, like all human affections, the goal of its aspirations; but never reaches it, because suspicion, susceptibility and fear stop it at every step, freeze the words on its lips, weaken its arms in the embrace, extinguish its flame when hardly lighted. I compare this affection with a St. Bartholomew obliged to walk among brambles and over rocks bristling with points, and for this reason I have given it the strange and new name of *excoriated love;* the French would call it *un amour mauvais coucheur.* It is perhaps the most wretched of loves, because, besides the natural misfortunes which are the inevitable lot of every daughter of Eve and every son of Adam, it creates its own troubles and enlarges them with the lens of the most unhappy imagination.

Excoriated love is a fatal still which transforms rose-petals into poison-ivy, honey into wormwood, aroma into fetidness, nourishment into venom. If kissed, it murmurs because the kiss was too violent or too cold; if caressed, it suspects that the caress may have had a second end in view. Even in the ecstasies of creation it would ask of the Creator why He had made the light so soon or so late. Whoever is loved by these unfortunates has always the right to address them with the words of the courtesan of Venice to the unhappy and mad philosopher of Geneva: *"Zaneto, Zaneto, ti non ti xe fato per far a l'amor!"* ("Johnny, Johnny, you are not made to make love!") And yet these unfortunate creatures love, and love deeply; and it is the enviable glory of powerful lovers to cure and win them over to the point of making them confess that at least once in their lives they were truly, faithfully and passionately loved. It is one of the most admirable triumphs of the amatory art to find a fabric so fine that it can touch the excoriated flesh of those poor unfortunates, and create for them an artificial atmosphere, in which they may be able to move without groaning, breathe without coughing, and live without cursing life.

These forms of love, which I have poorly outlined, are but rarely found in nature in a simple state, but are complicated and interwoven with each other, forming a thousand pictures: a real mine of resources for art, a veritable treasure of torments for the psychological thinker.

No man loves like another and no man loves perfectly, in the manner in which the type of a sublime love can be idealized in the regions of thought of our brain.

The perfect harmony of one love lacks a note of sensuality, that of another a tone of energy; one is too restless, another too languid, a third too violent. Even the most fortunate creatures, those who possess a just measure of voluptuousness, of sentiment and of poetry,—even those, who know they are loved ardently and faithfully, aspire to a love more perfect than that which they feel and better than that which they receive; and when this thirst for the ideal does not induce

us to violate the compact of fidelity, we should not complain, because love, too, must obey the common law, which compels us ever to aspire to purer regions, richer in splendors and warmer with ardors. At early dawn love awaits the promise of a warm noon, and in the burning sultriness looks forward with eager anticipation to the cool twilight of the evening; it is spurred by that impulse which drives forward men and things, matter and force, and the bliss of today expects a more intense voluptuousness for tomorrow. If this unquenchable thirst for the better should cease in us, it would be simply because life is spent in us; if the irresistible desire for a higher love should cease, it would be simply because, as light to the blind, the heavenly regions of the ideal—those regions where numberless targets are gathered at which are aimed the glances and the arrows of the human family—have all at once been closed to us.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HELL OF LOVE

Pain, so rich in afflictions and tortures, in its varieties as infinite as the grains of sand in the ocean, and as deep as the ocean's abysses, has reserved its greatest bitterness, its most cruel torments for love. And so it was to be; the warmest passion was to turn into the most inflexible frigidity; the deepest was to precipitate itself into the somberest depths; the richest in joys to be the most fecund in sorrows. From the fleeting breeze of a suspicion more rapid than the lightning, more evanescent than a word written in the soft sand of the seashore, to the certain consciousness of an unexpected betrayal; from the impatience of him who for one instant awaits his beloved, to the prolonged desperation of him who can no longer wait, love evinces all the notes of affliction, all the torments of the senses, all the tortures of sentiment. Of the bones which are scattered every day on the long path through which the human family passes on this planet, many were left by love; and suicide, homicide and insanity count in cemeteries and hospitals a much greater number of victims than are reckoned in the summary statistics of our sociologists. All this, of course, is for those who love with heart and mind and not with senses only. He who sees in love a question only of régime and hygiene recovers from the loss of his sweetheart with a tear and a new conquest; cures betrayal with betrayal, and with licentiousness heals every malady of the heart and drowns all his sorrows in his libertinism.

I certainly have neither strength nor courage sufficient to accompany the reader into the lower regions of the amorous hell. If you have already passed your thirtieth year, you

surely must have among the memories of your past some half hour of desperation and some sleepless night which make you shudder only by recalling them; you must have suffered certain torments, compared to which Dante's infernal region will seem blooming flower-beds to you, and you must imagine that nature rarely torments one man with all the tortures of the amorous passion. In human nature some sorrows make the heart incapable of suffering certain others, and the morbid rage of jealous pride protects us against the bitter sob of a generous sorrow, just as the chaste reserve of a modest nature deprives us of the possibility of suffering the ardent thirst for certain pleasures.

If you wish to open just a little the door of this hell, if you want to sound its abysses with a passing glance, imagine on one side all the hopes, all the voluptuousness, all the riches of love, and on the other all the fears, all the bitternesses, all the miseries. And after this cruel exposition of the joys and sorrows of love, you will not have ended yet, because the fields of sufferance are a hundred times larger than those where joy is sown. The physical possession of a woman is one; the tortures of a man beholding the fruit near without his being able to touch it are thousands; and this example will suffice for all.

Thus, as the antithesis of life is death, in its presence all the arrows of our pride lose their sharpness, all our hopes are torn, all our joys shattered. In the delirium of passion and pride we all repeat hundreds of times: "I would have her dead rather than belonging to another—a thousand times buried, but not unfaithful." And frequently the man who utters this blasphemy, his lips livid and his hair standing on end, stains his hands with blood by plunging them into the bosom of a victim. Folly and delirium! Hurricanes of the heart where love and hatred, pride and love, crime and torture clash and blend in the tumult of a dreadful storm. But love, which truly loves, infinite love which transforms man into the half of a creature that suffers and desires, ideal love that few feel and few see dimly in the twilight of a supra-sensible region which their hands cannot reach, recognizes

no greater torture than the death of the beloved. Oh, yes; let indifference, contempt, hatred, betrayal come, but that the dear one may live. Let others have this creature whom we have believed to be ours, into whose veins we have poured our blood; let this temple, perfumed with the incense of our thoughts, with the durable love of all our passions, become the temple of another god; let our flowers be trampled upon, our crowns broken, ourselves driven away by the rough broom of the sexton, but let the god live who sojourns there, let the idol of our life shine on the altar. Dejected like a fugitive, despised like a criminal, vituperated like a spy, in the cold and distant solitude we drink drop by drop a bottomless cup of gall, and every drop is bitterer than the last; but we know that she breathes the air of our planet, which we too breathe; we know that she is inebriated by the same sun that warms us; we know that among the numberless shadows that wander through the spaces of the invisible there is a creature around whom the air becomes mellower and the light brighter; that there are certain clods of earth which yield to the weight of a body that we love. No; as long as the woman we love lives, hope does not lose all its feathers, and far, far away, less tangible than a dream, more invisible than the regions of heaven, more inconceivable than eternity, it still soars on our horizon, perhaps not believed, not confessed, but it still lives and keeps us alive.

But when we still live and she is dead; when we are still so cowardly as to live, to breathe, to eat, and she is buried in the humid miasma of a wooden coffin; when all the world still exists and she is dead; when the joy of a thousand flowers that blossom in every ray of light, the trills of a thousand birds that sing of love, the groups of the fortunates who embrace each other, and the benedictions of so many happy creatures are nothing but a frame to a gelid void, a dark world; when we remain suspended between an infinity of joy that *was* ours and an infinity of sorrow that *is* ours and shall be ours tomorrow and as long as we are so cowardly as to live,—then we may look upon suicide as the

supreme joy of life, as the most sublime of human prides; then we may understand how man can in a flash dream of the great voluptuousness of mingling his bones with those of another creature; then we can understand how imagination can smile at the idea of the embrace of two corpses, of the fusion of two ashes, of the resurrection of two existences extinguished in the perfume of two flowers grown upon a human grave and which the wind blandly brings together that they may kiss again.

In the silence of the cemeteries there are some flowers that kiss each other and to which, perhaps, from under the earth responds the quivering of certain bones; there are certain lips on our planet, which closely pressed against each other one day, which death cruelly separated and which a second death has reunited forever. And when we survive, it is because a new organism has been created in us, and today we are no longer what we were yesterday. The thoughts of the past, the limbs of the past, all that we were yesterday is dead, dead forever; from the withered trunk of our existence, science, duty, friendship, paternal or maternal or filial love cause a new branch to shoot forth, which reproduces the ancient tree; and the common passer-by, seeing the same leaves, the same flowers, the same fruits, believes that only one corpse is buried there—but he is in error. We can survive certain sorrows on one condition only: to accomplish the miracle of dying today in order to be born anew tomorrow with the same name, but with a new life. And for the honor of human nature, these survivors remain the faithful and silent priests of the vanished god, like those Peruvians who, on the summits of the Andes, amidst the eternal glaciers of the Sorata or of the Illimani, still worship the god of their fathers. To understand certain sorrows is the proof of a lofty mind; to have experienced them is the glory of a martyr which exalts and purifies us.

I feel very sure that many who weep for love, either because their love is not returned or because they fear deception —if they have not already been deceived—or because of

their bitter disappointment when they found that they had burned their incense to an idol of clay or a statue of marble, will repute my description exaggerated, yet it is nevertheless a pallid picture of a sorrow which pen of man will never be able to portray from nature, but succeed only in divining from afar. To many death, the absolute evil, in the presence of which every hope perishes, seems preferable to the torture that threatens life yet does not kill, which opens the wounds and hinders the work done by nature to heal them. I wish that these gentlemen may never have the opportunity of making the cruel comparison for themselves, of experiencing the effects of an assimilated anatomy of two great sorrows, one of which is termed death, the other desperation. If they truly love, may they die earlier than their beloved! This is the sweetest blessing that I can offer them from the pages of my book.

Love is a passion so fervid and so deep that we must not wonder if it has abrupt convulsions and sudden swoons. Accustomed to dwell always in lofty regions, to have but extreme voluptuousness for nourishment, to vibrate with the highest notes of sentiment and the delirium of the senses, it may instantaneously become possessed, when it least expects it, by unreasonable fears, idiotic suspicions, inexplicable restlessness. By this I do not mean diffidence, jealousy, disgust, weary libertinism, or bitter disappointments, but a vague and shapeless fog that invades the heart which, by feeling too deeply, has become languid and congeals the nerves exhausted from excessive quivering. It is an indefinable hysteria which from a slight disorder may develop into a most intense bitterness.

An immense love, whatever the source of the heart from which it springs forth, is always followed by the shadow of an infinite fear. You adore your child; you have left him for five minutes on the lawn or in your garden, intent on filling his little cart with sand; he was as rosy and fresh as the flowers near him; as bright as the sun that gilded his curly locks. Now, while you are seated at your table, you have wished to call him, I know not why, perhaps to hear the

sweet sound of his silvery voice; and he does not answer you. You call him again, and again silence. He is utterly absorbed in the ponderous care of his wagon; but you, flying in a few seconds over a thousand miles of thought, have imagined that he was dead, that a snake had bitten him, that he had fallen in a swoon—who knows the fantastic visions that have passed through your mind! With your heart throbbing, your skin in a perspiration, you are afraid to rise and wish to defer for a moment the spectacle of a cruel loss. Of these and greater follies we are given a sad spectacle every day by that love of loves which alone was called by this name as the prince and god of all the amorous sentiments.

Neither the most patient and long observation of human phenomena nor the most lively imagination could enable us to divine all the petty tortures that lovers inflict upon themselves, perhaps to obey that cruel law which, according to some persons, has decreed that no one shall be happy on this planet.

In this field of evil, temperament is everything; to some individuals the phrase of Linnæus concerning the loves of the cat may be applied: "*Clamando misere amat.*" For these unfortunates (we have already described them) love is imbued with so much bitterness and surrounded by so many nettles that it actually resembles a bramble, all thorns and wormwood. Suspicious, fastidious, melancholy, they fear everything, scrutinize everything; they pass everything through the sieve, they pulverize everything, looking for the mite or the poison. In the kiss they suspect ice, in the caress indifference; of the impulses they feel only the shock, only the blows. And then, even that little honey that love has for all they wish to keep under watch in so many tabernacles and under so many seals that they are very fortunate when they can find and relish it! From a jealous jeremiad they fall into an hysterical soliloquy, and have hardly emerged from a gloomy meditation on the infidelity of man when they fall into the autopsy of a love-letter. These creatures

were certainly born under an unlucky star, and even if nature should make them a gift of a Venus draped by the Graces, or an Apollo with the brain of Jupiter, they would still be always unhappy, because bitterness is on their lips and not in the cup of love.

There is perhaps no greater torture than that which a woman must suffer when compelled to submit to the caress of a man whom she does not love. I do not mean by this the brutal violence that assimilates an embrace to homicide, and relegates it to the criminal code and the prison. In this case we would have a human beast that strikes, bites, sheds the blood of a poor creature who swoons with terror or struggles powerlessly in the clutches of a tiger: they are sorrows which belong to the story of terror, to the bloodiest pages of supreme tortures. I intend to speak here of the caresses that a woman must accord to a man because law, money or a surprise of the senses has sold her to him without love; I intend to speak of torture bitter, somber, deep as infinity, and which assimilates the prostitute to the martyr.

These sorrows, among the greatest that the human heart can suffer, were by a cruel nature almost exclusively reserved for woman. Man, by the special nature of his aggressive sex, must be spurred to the embrace by a sudden enthusiasm; his senses must be clouded by intense lust. In him voluptuousness can do without love, and physical love has a joy that is sufficient to conceal mercifully all his lack of sentiment and passion. For if indifference, hatred, contempt permeate him entirely, invading even the last intrenchments of love, then no caress in the world can revive it, no law, human or divine, can force him to accept a caress which to him is repugnant. There is no case in which the ancient theory of freedom of the will shows its ridiculous falsity as plainly as in this.

Woman, however, may be as cold as ice, feel chilly shivers of aversion and loathing run through her entire body, hate a man to the desire of death, despise to abhorrence a man who is near to her; and yet in many cases she can, and in very many she must, submit to his caress. Frigid, with grief in

her heart and hatred on her lips, she beholds the ardor of that man which burns but does not warm her; she looks on the sublimity of enthusiasm only as the culmination of ridicule; she discerns passion, but finds it simply grotesque; she perceives impetuosity, and for her it is nothing but violence; instead of love, with its flashes, its light, its perfumes, she sees, smells, touches simply a brutal force which debases, prostitutes, pollutes her; an infinity of repugnance in an ocean of nausea!

When woman has fallen into that mire through her own fault, she cannot be more cruelly punished. The immensity of prostitution is avenged with an infinity of outrage; the holiest thing is plunged into the most fetid mud; the greatest joy gives place to the greatest shame. But when, on the contrary, the daughter of Eve is brought to this sacrifice of the body by the tyranny of the law, by the perverted tendencies of our moral education, when she finds herself led to that cruel misfortune through ignorance or through the fault of others,—then, if she does not yet possess that skepticism which heals the heart or that cynicism which shields it, if she still knows what modesty is, if she still remembers the trepidations of love, then that poor woman drinks drop by drop the most cruel torture that any creature can endure; then she passes through a long and merciless agony.

To have dreamed for years and years of the promised land of love, to have conquered it, inch by inch, through the reveries of childhood and the rosy aurora of adolescence; to have felt an immense, horrible fear of dying before having loved; to have loved and to love, to be aware of a volcano in the heart, to be at the gates of paradise and inhale through the portal its inebriating perfumes—and then, after all this, to become conscious of having been transformed into a vessel which satisfies the thirst, to feel in the bosom a roaring beast —to be a part of the régime of a man, like magnesia or leeches—truly this is more cruel torture than the inquisitors ever invented; it is really too great a sorrow for a lonely weak creature!

What mass of meditations, what abysses of desperation are

gathered in a few seconds in the head of a woman caressed by a man whom she does not love! What eloquence in silence, that silence which Ovid, the libertine, eagerly advised women to avoid! Often does a man press to his bosom a creature who does not love him and whom he too heedlessly prostitutes, while the victim meditates a long, cruel revenge. More than one adultery, more than one assassination was conceived, discussed, vowed in that moment when man, enjoying the supreme bliss, believed to have in his arms a happy creature. More than one embrace has generated twins, a new man and a new hatred; a tenacious and bitter hatred, which only the death of the one who hates can extinguish, since it often survives the death of its object.

O men, you who see in love a cup to empty, and find in matrimony only an association of two capitals or a mechanism for reproducing the species, remember that for many creatures love is the first and the last of passions, the first and the last of joys; and remember that for very many women, whom you neglect and perhaps despise, love is all of life.

There is no nature so unhappy that its distress could not be relieved by another nature capable of mending the shreds of the heart, tempering the bitterness, straightening the rachitic limbs. There is no man, born weak or sickly, who could not become robust if he only should live in a climate, be supplied with food and surrounded with the physical and moral atmosphere that agrees with him. And I believe that the same can apply to love. If we could dedicate half a century to the search for the right woman, if Diogenes' lantern could be fitted with the electric light which modern science concedes to us, certainly among the thousand millions of human beings who tread this planet we could and should be able to find the woman who would be happy with us and make us happy. Unfortunately, life is too short and love is too rapid and exacting in its desires to make such a search possible; and even for the most fortunate and wisest creatures a part of happiness is always among the unknown quantities determined by chance and not by reflection. Hence

many and beautiful natures are tied by love-knots, and still are not happy because characters fit each other on many sides of the human polygon but not on all.

The study of these contrasts, of these partial incompatibilities would require the moral analysis of the entire man, of all his social vicissitudes, while many of those sorrows do not belong solely to love, but spring from all human affections and poison friendship, fraternal, filial and paternal loves; some of them, however, are peculiar to the love of loves.

To feel at the same hour, at the same moment, in the same degree, the stimulus of a desire or the thirst for a caress is a rare thing, a fortunate coincidence which gilds with the most beautiful rays the happiest hours of life; but it can never be the bread of a daily bliss. In all other cases, thirst arises in one of the two and is communicated to the other, so that a spark draws a spark, a caress generates caresses. It is an invitation of lips, a fluttering of wings, a harmonious note which calls from a bough to another bough; but it is always the invitation to a rendezvous, the awakening of one who slumbers. In these invitations, in these first skirmishes, the ridiculous always runs parallel and very near to the sublime. Love stands between them, it is true, and never permits them to unite; but the least inadvertence, the least unscrupulous or heedless movement may bring the two elements into contact; and the ridiculous, wherever it touches, wounds self-love and, with it, love.

Even upon the most impatient, the most ridiculous, the most grotesque desires you should throw at once the mantle of love to cover them. Every threat of ridicule then vanishes like vapor; no wounding of self-love is possible. I address myself to woman, because she oftener than we has the opportunity of healing these unsightly wounds, because she has her hand suavely ready to aid. Woe, if your companion should blush through your fault, because you knew not at the proper time and place how to close your eyes or shield them with the merciful veil of your hand or your love!

How much bitterness, how much rancor and spite, how many nettles and thorns are found on the blooming paths of the most fervid passion, just because delicacy of sentiment does not always know how to reconcile the inequalities of the senses, because a too exacting modesty repels a too live ardor of temperament, or because woman does not decide with wise perception that the too exacting demands, prompted by selfish love and not by love, should be allowed to starve! By fleeing one may lose or conquer; by standing one's ground one may lose or conquer: but many flee when they should not recede, many stand firm when they should flee; hence many defeats which disappoint both conquerors and conquered, and love often lies on the ground drenched with its own blood.

The tortures, the spites, the bitternesses, the wearinesses, the stings, the torments of love should be deeply studied because they always move side by side with joy and voluptuousness, and very few are so fortunate as not to stumble against them. Much luck, a thorough knowledge of man, great experience can defend us from them, so that at the end of our career we may bless love, which, though with some slight sorrow, has perfumed our life with its most beautiful flowers.

I have alluded only to some of the torments which populate the hell of love; but their number is infinite, their names are countless. In every field of sentiment, of senses and of intellect man possesses a much greater possibility to suffer than to enjoy; and when bliss is attained and the veins are cut from which oozes the bitter sap of sorrow, it is always after a long, fierce battle, in which we defend ourselves with all the weapons of nature and art. Here also—and here more, perhaps, than anywhere else—the weight of mental virtues is revealed in all its power, the influence of a noble and generous character in all its strength. The ardent and impetuous heart is not a source of greater amorous bitterness when the calm light of reason burns within it, when the sublime incapacity to commit base actions accompanies the

desire for the good, when we enjoy more the pleasure we give than that which we receive.

Weak and defective natures are strengthened and straightened when they have for support the robust column of an affectionate and noble nature; even the rabid rancors of small hearts lose their bitterness in the calm blue ocean of a character which is all sweetness and sympathy.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DEGRADATIONS OF LOVE

Love, being the most powerful agitator of human elements that was ever known, stirs the slime which is always found even in the noblest natures; while in men whose souls have been kneaded with sludge it becomes the greatest coefficient of vice and crime. Love, like all other sentiments, has a pathology of its own, a superior pathology, because it so widens its sphere of action as to enclose a larger field and has more prepotent needs to satisfy. A man incapable of a base deed even though dying of hunger, even though about to lose all that he holds most dear, may compromise with his conscience when a question of love arises, and many, many blemishes stain the texture of the noblest and loftiest natures. Love wants to possess us bound hands and feet, and this is an inexhaustible source of disgrace, guilt, mean cowardice and great crimes.

The degradations of love are as numberless as the grains of sand in the sea, as many as love's own delights; they are of every size and adapt themselves to the infinite degrees of human baseness. It seems to me, however, that in a general study of physiology they can be reduced to two principal forms, that is to say, *impotency* and *prostitution.*

Impotency is not only a disease that should receive the care of the physician or the hygienist; it is not only a case which requires the attention of the legislator: but it is a moral shame that must be thoroughly studied by the psychologist who endeavors to outline the natural story of love.

In the very simplest organism of inferior animals every desire of love ceases when age, disease or a wound has exhausted the energy of the genital organs. In man, instead,

the most irresistible and bestial needs are so teeming with psychical elements of the moral and the intellectual world as to survive the disease of the organ. An innocent man loves even without being aware of his manhood, and a woman can die of love although knowing nothing of the existence of the womb. True it is, no amorous note arises in the eunuch, or if the phantoms of a strange lasciviousness are noticed wandering here and there, they are specters that belong to the limbo of the most transcendent pathology. These poor pariahs of nature are, however, very rare; while our rachitic civilization makes by hundreds the semi-eunuchs who fill with cuckoldly ornaments the sanctuary of the family and the low world of wandering loves. Statistics, fortunately, cannot obtain the exact number of these "half-men" and consign them to their inexorable files; be it enough for us to know that they are many, very many, much more numerous than feminine virtue and patience could tolerate.

Nature's whole love, true love, nude but innocent love, is not all sentiment or thought, but also a function of reproductive life, a need of the senses. Martyrs and saints could mutilate themselves and die in the beatitude of their mutilations; but the majority of men does not consist of saints or martyrs. Every mutilation of love is a shame and the most fecund generator of many other minor shames. In the chaste and cool dawn of early youth, more than one woman consented unwittingly to an infamous compact by which a man offered her a great name and great wealth in exchange for a "yes." The wretched man loved her, desired her, but could not possess her as nature commanded man to possess woman; he wished to own the temple and feel the emotion of owning it without having the right to enter it. Sometimes the eunuch was not an abject being and did confess his shame before his betrayal, but the innocent maiden did not understand and accepted the compact. And who does not believe himself a hero or a martyr at that age? And the eunuch embraced his precious prey, inundated her with sterile kisses, and endeavored to warm her with his impotent caresses; and the marmoreal statue of adolescent virginity

trembled with new and, to her, incomprehensible emotions. Later on, the virgin realized that she was a woman, that in vain she was a woman, and love attacked and seized virtue, and felled it despairing and imploring, and the covenant sworn in good faith was broken by the most powerful of affections. How many domestic misfortunes, what a fruitful stream of bastards, how many brigands spring from this contaminated source!

O you, real eunuchs, half-eunuchs, quarter-eunuchs, do not hope to be loved by a woman on whom you have imposed an infamous contract! No virtue, no oath can resist the sacred laws of love; nobody is stronger than nature. And if you have found a heroine, why make a martyr of her? Do you want to be the executioner of her whom you say you love?

And you, generous women, noble women, who can elevate to the highest regions even the lowest passion, do not accept any compact involving a mutilation of love. You, teachers of every kind of sacrifice, you think that you will make happy an outcast of nature, you impose upon yourselves, smiling perhaps, the sublime mission of redeeming a desperate man: but I assure you that neither virtue nor sacrifice nor heroism can stifle that formidable cry of the universe of the living that wants you to be wives and mothers. While the martyr, with the palm of sacrifice tightly pressed to her bosom, will try to smile, a cruel, deep, painful stab in her heart will warn her: "You, Eve and daughter of Eve, will become a mother only through a crime, will enter the sanctuary of sanctuaries, the tabernacle of maternity, only through the door of domestic treason."

No; love is not all senses and all lust. Sentiment can be such a great part of it as to conceal voluptuousness in the most secluded recess of a hidden region. No; woman can be happy even without voluptuousness if she only feels herself loved: but she wishes to love, and should love, "a man." I appeal to all the daughters of Eve, and, to be spared blushing, they may reply with a nod of the head and without moving their lips: Is it not true that you would prefer a

hundred times to be loved by a "real man," even with a vow of chastity, rather than to be profaned and satiated with lust at the hands of a eunuch? Is it not true that above all you want to have for support that firm column called "an honorable man"? And certainly he is not an honorable man who claims the possession of a woman and demands to be loved by her when he is not a man.

The half-men who at forty, at fifty years of age aspire to have a family, after having dragged their half-virility through the lasciviousness of prostitution and the dainties of the erotic kitchen, should never suppose that lechery can take the place of true love in a woman. They can prostitute their spouse, but they can never make her love them earnestly and deeply. They are foredoomed by the inexorable laws of nature to figure largely in the population of cuckoldom.

When impotency falls like a thunderbolt on the head of two happy lovers, it is only a disease, a misfortune that concerns the physician and the pharmacist; but when it precedes love, it is cowardice, degradation, infamy. The honest man should never attempt to conceal it from himself or justify it; he should either courageously renounce love, a thing that does not concern him, or expose the sore and ask the armed hand of the surgeon to cut and cauterize it. Let him become a man again, and then see if he can aspire to the delights of sentiment. Before becoming a farmer, he should possess a farm.

The complicated mechanism of our social organism, in the same manner as it offers to the thirst of ardent youth voluptuousness without love, imposes on many lovers, with a more cruel amputation, love without voluptuousness. Here we have the two chief sources of the thousand sorrows which human society prepares for those who love: "Voluptuousness without love," that is, all the degradations and shames of prostitution; "Love without voluptuousness," that is, all the tortures of enforced chastity. Between these two hells the enamored youth remains a long time suspended, until, to avoid death, he takes lechery and imagination into a somber old boat and flees away with them to hide in the reedy

marshes and among the miasmas of self-abuse—the lowest of the degradations of love, and one which occupies a proper place between impotency and prostitution. Yes; as man enjoys all the Olympus of love, he must also submit to all its degradations.

In the book which I will dedicate to the hygiene of love this problem will be thoroughly studied. Here I shall refer to it only so far as it concerns the physiology of sentiment. It is painful to admit it, but it is true: our modern society has rendered love so difficult to many unhappy creatures as to make them pass under the Caudine Forks of this cruel dilemma: either to buy voluptuousness and counterfeit love with it, or dream of love in the mire of solitary lasciviousness. In one way or the other, we are forced to become counterfeiters and to blush for ourselves at the manner in which we satisfy the most powerful of human needs.

Solitary love is not only a sin against hygiene, and one which kills health and vigor, but it is also an offense against morals, a poison of happiness. He who repeatedly falls into the crime and is frequently obliged to blush, tarnishes more every day the limpid purity of his own dignity, weakens the strong spring of virile resolutions and becomes a greater coward in all the battles of life. While he blushes for himself and curses himself and the love that condemns him to a continuous debasement, he blushes more than ever in the presence of the woman of whom he does not feel worthy and of whom he becomes less worthy at each fall. He poisons the wave of love at its very first source and, even when he later succeeds in loving, has spoiled the purity of his tastes and his aspirations and in the arms of a woman who loves him complains of the solitary twinges of a morbid voluptuousness, like one who, having burned his mouth with the pungent tastes of pipe and brandy, can no longer relish the flavors of pineapple and strawberry.

Love is the greatest of conquests, the sweetest of delights, the joy of joys; to renounce it in order to replace it with degradation is worse than a crime, it is an infamy. Better a hundred times chastity with its sublime tortures, prostitu-

tion with its filth. True and complete love is a splendid banquet under the fragrant trees of a garden, amidst the glittering of the chalices, the harmonies of music and the witty jests of friends; solitary love is a furtive meal with a bone picked up in the fetidness of a dunghill and gnawed in the dark.

Prostitution is, after solitary abuse, the greatest degradation of love, and, what is worse,—it should be said at once,—a necessary one in modern society. Tibullus hurls at it a splendid malediction:

> "Jam tua qui Venerem docuisti vendere primus
> Quisquis es, infelix urgeat ossa lapis!"
>
> ("Whoever thou art who first hast taught to sell the pleasures of love, may an ill-boding stone crush thy bones!")

This imprecation, repeated by all moralists of every succeeding age, could not prevent for one day the sale of love, and universal experience demonstrates that St. Augustine was a sounder philosopher when he wrote:

> "Aufer meretrices de rebus humanis, turbaveris omnia libidinibus; constitue matronarum loco, labe ac dedecore dehonestaveris."
>
> ("Take the prostitutes out of human things, and you will disturb the whole world with lust; put them in the place of wives, and you will defile home with disease and dishonor.")

If St. Augustine had written but this sentence, I would proclaim him a great psychologist; in a few words he has shown all the sides of the tremendous problem, given a lesson of toleration to the intolerant, of social science to economists, and today, after so many centuries, his words are as true, profound, inexorable as when he addressed them to a world so different from ours.

Difficult problems are not solved by fleeing from or by

concealing them; and yet many physicians, many philosophers attempt to solve the most burning questions of modern society after the manner of a child who by closing his eyes believes that he is fleeing from the dog that threatens him. To Dr. Monlau in Spain and Dr. Bergeret in France, who thought that they would be able to save society by abolishing prostitution, I replied in a few words which I wish to save from the shipwreck of the newspapers in order to gather them in the shadow of this book:

"I have never wondered at finding philosophers who study man in Fichte or in Kant without having ever touched his palpitating body, or examined any of his fibers with the microscope; who advise the legislator to destroy in the social organism, with iron and fire, that livid and cancerous spot called prostitution; neither have I given the alarm or extolled it as a miracle when I heard the *auto-da-fé* invoked against the houses of ill fame by moralists who have had the rare fortune of having been born without the sixth sense, or the still rarer merit of smothering it with the extinguisher of an iron will. But when I hear these intolerant cries from the mouth of a physician, I shake my head diffidently, and with a compassionate voice I ask myself: 'Is he really a physician? Has this moralist actually seen a man in convulsive delirium and cut into his cold and rigid flesh on the chilly marble slab of the anatomical cabinet? He who hurls the anathema at prostitution, is he really the physician who should act as a kind link between the legislator, who in man sees only a defendant to punish, and the philanthropist, who in him considers only an unhappy creature to heal and help?'

"These and other questions I addressed to the illustrious Spanish physician Monlau when he proposed to his government the absolute suppression of the houses of ill fame; and then I had the pleasure of seeing my poor words printed in the progressive Spanish medical journals. Now I make the same reproach to Dr. Bergeret, who, in

one of his memoirs on prostitution in the country places and small towns of France, went so far as to fling the anathema against that caustic wound which civilization has opened in the diseased flesh of the modern social organism; and I, with a sad air, repeat to the French physician a melancholy: *'Tu quoque, fili mi?'*

"Bergeret lost much of his time and ink in narrating lurid stories of what occurred in some villages of France. And who does not know similar stories? We have them in Italy, in Germany; we can find them in every country where humanity loves and suffers, gets drunk and prostitutes itself; wherever the eyes of the authorities cannot penetrate into the most secret fissures of the social edifice where lie concealed the lurid parasites that sting and devour us. But between deploring the evils that are the results of clandestine prostitution and destroying all toleration on this ground there is an abyss over which the physician and the legislator should not pass on the waxen wings of an Arcadian flight, but which should be crossed over the solid bridge of a wise criticism.

"Then, my dear moralist, my dear theorist, you say that men learn vice in the houses of ill fame; but, then, without taverns would there be no assassins, without pharmacists would there be no poisoners, without manufacturers of gunpowder and bayonets would there be no wars? And who, pray, is the cause of the existence of houses of ill fame, taverns, daggers, poisons, firearms, if not man himself, that man whom you ought to be able to understand if it is true that you also are made of the same dough? Your morals are those of the inquisitor who burns the sinner whom he cannot convert; they are as false and coarse as those of the legislator who has only the prison and the scaffold for the education of the guilty; as those of the surgeon who barbarously amputates the member which, with a wiser and more merciful science, he should preserve. Modern civilization substitutes the school for the inquisitor's stake, has more faith in books than in prisons and halters, more in preservative medicine

than in the surgeon's knife. And as long as the social organism is diseased, as long as it is a poor creature imbued with evil humors, with many curious bones and many scrofulous tumors, we will kindly cauterize its flesh to keep it alive, to divert into more ignoble parts those acrid humors that would poison the sources of life, until we shall succeed with the tonic cure of education in renewing the blood in the veins of this old invalid and in pouring this new blood into his flesh, his bones and his nerves, to rebuild them.

"This is why we still preserve the cautery of prostitution, and we wish to guard it with the same jealous care with which a physician keeps a precious wound open to save the life of a diseased organism.

"And believe me, O egregious colleague of the country beyond the Alps, when life shall be no longer threatened and the organism shall have new blood, then we will close this wound, too, together with many other ones which are still bleeding. We will close the house of voluptuousness when every man will have his nest and love will not be considered a crime any longer."

There are some savage races among which prostitution is unknown, while no civilized nation is without prostitutes; on the contrary, every country, even the most moral, has the high prostitutes and the very high, the low and the very low. Not in all countries are prostitutes cynically named according to the price they ask for their favors, as in Persia, where they are termed "the fifty *tomani,*" "the twenty *tomani,*" etc.; but everywhere a tariff is the index of the hierarchy of vice and a scale of lechery. Alexander Severus did not want the money collected through taxes on houses of prostitution to be paid into the treasury; and Ulpian, his minister, used it for the maintenance of the theaters and the public health. With Juvenalian sagacity, the government of Brazil devotes to the regulation of vice the money received from the sale of decorations and titles of nobility. We find everywhere women who sell themselves, but we also find,

to our honor, that society is everywhere ashamed of this stain, conceals and does not mention it, and a mysterious mephitic air hangs heavily over the simony of love.

A thousand muddy streamlets carry their tributes to prostitution; but at the first source the cause is one and powerful: in man an imperious appetite for voluptuousness, in woman an imperious want of bread or licentiousness, or licentiousness and bread at the same time. Unfortunately woman can always sell five minutes of voluptuousness without love, without desire; she can sell herself with disgust in her heart and hatred on her lips. And the joy she sells is paid for according to the requirements of beauty, luxury, fashion, according to the infamous art with which she knows how to feign pleasure and counterfeit love. Procurers and procuresses hasten to the market of lechery to test the flesh of the precious victims, to fatten the lean and buy the plump for the higher bidder; and panders and bawds, keeping within the shadow of the law, conceal in the lurid or gilded prisons of prostitution that quivering herd of youth and shame. And prisoners in the same gloomy atmosphere are martyrs of love and nymphomaniacs; victims of hunger and of ignorance; fallen angels and foul demons; all the lowest strata of feminine society, all the bloody carrions of the great social battles.

There, in those dark haunts of licentiousness, man forgets how to love, loses the holy poetry of the heart and the mysterious quivers of sentiment, prostitutes the most gigantic forces of thought and affection. Without hunger, he partakes of savory food; thirstless, he becomes intoxicated; without the necessity of overcoming modesty, he obtains everything, and money levels all virtues and concedes the maddest polygamy; and there one sees the nude and chaste statue of Love dragged in the fetid bog by a frolicsome tipsy crowd. Such is the love that modern civilization offers to all those hundred thousand pariahs who cannot find the straw to weave the chaste nest of the family, to all those who cannot make a vow of chastity and do not wish to deceive an innocent maiden or steal another man's woman.

Our civilized society can really be proud of this; the philanthropists with their tearful dirges, the economists with their wise reflections, the legislators with their elaborate codes, can join in a chorus to sing hosannas to this stupendous solution of the problem. Either a starving family or prostitution; either children cast into the depth of misery or faith betrayed in the house of a friend; proletariate or infamy; degradation or crime. Stupendous dilemmas that crown our society with numberless horns and sow deception, hunger and corruption everywhere. If a thick bark of hypocrisy did not cover the rotten trunk of our modern civilization, what a horrible spectacle should we behold! And when a sincere moralist or a true philosopher attempts to cut the bark away and show to us through a little fissure how deep the decay is, then we flee horrified and clamor against such impudence, such sacrilege!

The government should, therefore, deal with prostitution as a malady to be treated, not because there is any hope of cure, but because society owes to every sick person a physician and a bed. It should not be permitted to grow, to spread, to parade its lurid sores, to cover itself with tinsel and paint; but it should be watched tenderly as in a hospital, so that in the passer-by it may awaken compassion rather than lechery.

And while the state keeps a good vigil, writers and teachers should raise the level of general culture and teach the elect the paradise of chastity, which contains a treasure of delights for the future of him who waits (this, alas! the libertine will never be able to understand), and preserves for true love, which all may hope to attain, the infinite joys of a virgin voluptuousness. The sale of love should neither be proclaimed as a feast of the human family, nor officially suppressed, because it then overflows and inundates all the paths of society; it should be tolerated and pitied, as we already tolerate and pity many other maladies of our social organism.

To reach this sublime goal, to hope at least to attain it, we must above all scrape off from modern love the hundred

coats of hypocrisy; we must not have our children learn love as a crime in the house of vice; but immediately, at the first dawn of youth, they should be taught that it is a sublime delight conceded to the good and the noble and is to be conquered in the same manner as glory and wealth. Not the chambermaid or the prostitute, but a modest and pure girl should be the first teacher of love; a woman who should teach us love before voluptuousness, to be chaste in our desires in order to possess her some day.

We conceal and believe that we are able with silence to suppress the passions and suffocate the desires; but we have concealed too much and have been silent too long. In the most puritanical country in the world, England, one of the most honest and wisest physicians of London published a book—that has already reached the ninth edition—in which he frankly dared assert that free love, without fecundation, is the only remedy against the proteiform corruption that invades modern society, because of the impossibility for most of the people of morally satisfying one of the most powerful needs. This book was a distressing surprise to me. When they can write such a book as this in England and devour nine editions, when an honest physician can calmly discuss *preventive intercourse,* when Malthus finds such an eloquent and daring commentator who brings his theory from the field of economy into that of morality, of hygiene and even of religion, I believe it my duty to affirm that society is thoroughly diseased and (I say it loudly) should be cured.

Yes; modern society, infected with so much prostitution and adultery, and incessantly proclaiming itself monogamous while it is largely polygamous, demands a physician to cure its sores, to cleanse it from so much degradation, to concede loves virtuous and more free, or at least less soiled with filth and lies. And this physician must be a less hypercritical and less exacting morality, but at the same time more exalted, because more human; a morality that should teach us never to separate voluptuousness from love, and that chastity is the most beautiful and holiest of joys and the most watchful guardian of love.

The elect never prostitute themselves, not even in these times, because they love, and because, having once entered the paradise of love, they feel too great repugnance to descend to the mire of the simony of voluptuousness. They should exert all their faculties with all their strength in order that the masses, too, may elevate themselves to the high spheres in which they dwell, and where they breathe a purer air and cull the most delicate and beautiful flowers.

CHAPTER XIX

FAULTS AND CRIMES OF LOVE

If you ask a hundred women what is the most common fault of love, probably the same reply will be repeated a hundred times: "Love is inconstant; love is a liar." If, on the other hand, you consult the gloomy volumes in which man gathers the statistics of his crimes, you will find several columns bristling with figures indicating the large number of suicides and homicides for love; you will find no records of inconstancy, and but rarely, scattered here and there, some cases of adultery. The jurymen, then, that amorphous and chaotic mass in which every idea of right and wrong dissolves and vanishes, always deal very leniently with crimes for which the code would send the culprit to death or to prison for life, and they often acquit the man who has turned murderer for love.

In none of the human institutions is such impenetrable darkness as in the field of love, where an intricate mass of reticences, contradictions, tolerations and cruelties causes common sense to stumble at every step and, what is worse, offends and wounds the sentiment of justice. It is a written law that adultery is a crime to be punished with the gravest penalties, but in actual life adultery is the most common and most venial sin ever known; it is not only tolerated, but fêted and almost accepted as a social institution. The incitement to prostitution is considered a very serious crime, but many legislators sell their daughters to a rich husband who cannot love her, never will love her and will drive her to adultery with the force of irresistible necessity. And is this not prostitution? Man is either not worthy of the laws which he has imposed on himself, or he is rambling in a

labyrinth of maniacal vertigo; he is either an arrogant blockhead or a shameless liar.

Man is a little of all this, but he is chiefly a hypocrite. He proclaims solemnly to the four winds that he is a son of God and that he inhabits the earth by chance and temporarily; born in Olympus, he will return there soon and forever. He is a god on vacation who condescends to play and eat with the peasants, but he is winged and lives only on ideals. A moment later he forgets his proclamations, his braggardism and shows more than ever that he is an animal of the soil; he sees the painful contrast between what he has said and what he has done, covers himself and goes into hiding. Such is the eternal formula of his eternal contradictions. In love he lies more frequently and more brazenly than in any other case. He has supposed for a moment that love, too, could be just and hence measured on the same scale as the other sentiments, and above all leveled by the common yoke of the other affections. And yet love may possess all virtues; it may be merciful, heroic, kind, generous, but it can never be just; born in injustice, it lives on injustice and dies of injustice; it has but one right—strength; it possesses only one weapon—arrogance.

When deceived love arms itself with an homicidal knife, I class that crime among the most inevitable effects of instantaneous hatred and natural revenge; when love is imposed as a duty on a girl, and instead of love hatred is born, instead of affection contempt springs up, I remark that love cannot be ordered for a fixed hour like a dinner, and that, if infamies and bastards are born from the obscene nuptials of gold and vanity, love has nothing to do with it, because love was absent, and he who can prove an alibi is at once acquitted by the most cruel and most stubborn of public prosecutors. When I see love kill dignity, friendship, the holiest affections of the heart; when I see it breaking with furious rage the iron bars of the cage in which a cruel code of laws has imprisoned it, I acquit it instantly because love is not a wild beast that can be shut up in a menagerie, but a creature as free as air, that lives on bright light and

burning suns, on the aroma of the forest and the fragrance of the meadows. You have made it hydrophobic with hunger and thirst; you have made it furious with your own violence; and you complain because the mad creature bites and kills? This is admitted to be true by universal consent; and as there is an immense inequality between what the laws require and that of which human loves are capable, men shrug their shoulders and forgive, forgive always, forgive all, even where human justice should rise in all the solemn grandeur of its majesty to protect the most sacred rights of family and society. In the codes, love is often a crime; in the paths of life, for the most rigorous individuals, it is at most a weakness—a dear, a sympathetic weakness.

For me hypocrisy is a chain that ties and chokes love in modern society, and I dare affirm that the only fault, the only crime which this sentiment can commit is falsehood. Let us begin by freeing it from the leprosy which infects, devours, disgraces it, and then we shall see what remains sound beneath in that dear, nude and virginal love that Mother Nature has conceded us. Let us first save the life of this poor creature, and then we shall attend to the rest; we shall find out whether it has other misfortunes, whether it can commit other crimes besides that of lying.

In my opinion, love is today a liar from head to foot; a liar when it swears and when it forswears; a liar when, a hundred times a day, it pronounces the words *eternal, eternity, eternally;* it is a liar in law and in life; it is unfaithful, a thief, a traitor, solely because it is a liar. I may have a *Scipionian mania,* the fixed idea of a *delenda Carthago;* but if I should have to answer the questions: "Which are the true, the great loves?" "Which are the happy loves?" I would reply without hesitation: "The sincere." All the faults of love are all lies; almost all the misfortunes of love are the offspring of untruth; and, finally, adultery is nothing but the most infamous of love's lies. "What is," I will ask in turn, "the only remedy for unhappy loves, the only anchor of salvation for betrayed loves?" "Sincerity, sincerity, nothing but sincerity."

At the risk of seeing many disciples and many masters of love smile skeptically, I will say at once that woman, from the first day she loves, lies less than we do, and during the life of love she is less unfaithful than we are. Man, in his first declaration, even when quite sure that he loves, swears instantly, swears an eternity of infinite affection; while woman, more modest, more timid, more reserved, answers that she does not love yet; that she has not yet consulted her heart; that, perhaps, she will love. The less one swears, the less one forswears; and if a holy horror may deprive speech of some fiery accent and some amorous expansion of inebriating expressions, it nevertheless stamps it with virile dignity which makes it blessed among women, while it gives the sexual relations a character of tender reserve and delicate serenity. Man often uses the "eternal oaths" as weapons of seduction, and parades them at every hour as a measure of the bottomless depths of his love; but sometimes he swears sincerely, honestly, because nothing so boldly generates eternity and infinity as does armed desire. It is only too true, however, that the hasty and imprudent vow is a fruitful father of lies and most fruitful grandparent of infidelity.

Very few are the eternal loves, as are geniuses, Venuses, and Apollos. We all anxiously climb the mountain of the ideal, but few can get a branch or a leaf of the sacred tree. Some loves of the lower orders last years; others, months; some of them are as transient as the ephemera, for which long is the life of a day. Now, frankness can give all loves the baptism of honesty, and even a frivolous man can die without amorous remorse if his loves were all honest. He has loved much and fleetingly, but he has never lied, never betrayed anybody, never perjured himself.

Sometimes lies are told through compassion, and woman, more frequently than we, striving in vain to keep alive a dying love, is loath to inflict a cruel wound on the companion who still loves her, and endeavors with a mighty effort to deceive herself and him, until through habit of hypocrisy she succeeds in feigning a love that no longer exists; and

from lie to betrayal the road is short and slippery. The lie at first was merciful, then it grew into a habit, and at last became transformed into a crime.

No; lovers or husbands, companions of voluptuousness or vestals of the family, never tell an untruth, even when it is suggested to you by pity. It is hard, cruel, to see the blooming tree of a happy passion felled by a sudden hurricane; tremendous is the rending of a heart that breaks in a day under the shock of an atrocious blight; but these sorrows do not debase us, and, although capable of killing, do not humiliate us. Love killed by violence remains stretched on the ground as beautiful as a thunderstruck angel, and memory weaves a wreath for him and with the most precious aromas and balsams preserves him from putrefaction. Love killed by the lingering tabes of a secret betrayal, is a leper who dies in the fetidness of a hospital, a horror to himself and to the others; a corpse slowly corroded by phthisis and scrofula, leaving no trace whatever of the time when he, too, was a young and robust organism.

False and cruel is the pity that causes us to simulate a love which no longer exists. No sorrow is greater than that which deception inflicts upon us; love, self-esteem, self-love, love of ownership, all the warmest and most powerful of human affections, are pierced with a hundred stabs at the same time, and the pain is so intense that it poisons all our life with wormwood and gall. How beautiful, instead, how sublime is a love that, without swearing eternity or infinity, lasts eternal and infinite as long as two human hearts throb together; how beautiful is a love that needs no chains and lives on faith and liberty!

To love means to be all of another; to be loved means to have become a living part of another: the lie begins when, with cynical licentiousness, the man or the woman is divided in two parts, and the body is given to one, the soul, as it were, to the other. Love is a whole that cannot be divided without being killed, and, unless voluptuousness is reduced to a plain question of hygiene, one cannot love two human creatures at the same time with that sentiment which

for its superiority over all other affections is called love, without betraying both. I hold in much higher estimation a woman who, after a long career of facile loves, can say, "I have never loved two men at the same time," than a bigoted matron who boasts of having never betrayed her duties as a spouse because with wise and cautious lechery she knows how to sell voluptuousness without seriously compromising the property reserved for the husband.

Lies are all infamous; but in love there are some venial and some perfidious: it is one thing to deceive an old libertine and another to betray a faithful husband; one to lie to a frivolous coquette, another to deceive a virtuous woman. Further on we shall outline the rights and duties of love; but here we must point out the stem from which they hang, like the grapes from their stalk. Woman belongs to man, man belongs to woman; Love is the son of the most free selection; it is born when it wants and as it wants; it appears on the plains or on the summit of the mountains; it is born nude and as free as the air; it does not ask for passports, because it passes with impunity through all the police lines.

Men and women, free and pure, you should seek and love each other; study true love, and consecrate it with the only vow that love should make when it would close itself in the temple of the family. If you truly love, if you are worthy of each other, if your love offends no superior duty, no human force can oppose your powerful attraction, and nature and men will bless your selection. Read and read again all that I have written on the first loves; swear seldom; never swear if you possess this virtue; at most swear but once, the first and last oath that will unite you in wedlock. The compact violated in the first steps of the life of love is a murder and prepares the career of a brigand tolerated by civilization. To betray a virgin is, in so far as the law is concerned, a question for the public prosecutor or for the mayor of your town; to betray her without dishonoring her is an anonymous infamy that poisons two existences and two loves, that leaves in you an eternal bitterness, in the

woman an eternal rancor. Love, seek, study each other, but never swear, never lie to the maiden who at the dawn of youth demands of the first sun a ray to enlighten and warm her.

There is, however, a lie in love that excels all lies, a betrayal that surpasses all others; there is a perfidiousness that outclasses every assassination, every homicide, every rape: love with the wife of another, a crime which, protected by the law, cherished by consuetudes, fêted by our infamously hypocritical customs, avoids prison and scaffold only because it takes the simple and easy precaution not to be termed adultery. To introduce ourselves into the sanctuary of a happy family, to become a friend to him whom we wish to betray, to cover him with the mantle of our benevolent protection; to seduce slowly and pitilessly the wife of another; with surprise, with the thousand pitfalls of moral violence to open for her an abyss into which she will fall; to acquire with the first conquest the impunity of a long series of crimes and open in the family a large spring of gall that will poison two or three generations: to do all this without expense and without danger,—these in our century are termed the deeds of astute men, the consolation of unhappy wives; and it can be done once, twice, ten times without the perpetrators losing either the love of women or the esteem of men.

To be seized by a vertigo of the senses, to embrace publicly the wife of another, or to let oneself be seen by her husband, is called adultery, and, according to the circumstances and, above all, the gravity of the scandal, it means a journey to prison or to some other rigorous penal institution; it means disgrace to one's name and to that of one's children. Modern society particularly recommends prudence; it does not want any scandal; it does not want to be disturbed in its loves so amply polygamous, but so piously cautious; modern civilization does not wish to behold publicly any nudity whatever; it wishes to be believed moral, respectful and respected. It matters little and is none of its concern if an astute libertine spends his youth in filling families with

bastards, awaiting the day when he can abandon the betrayed wives for a convenient marriage. It is a private affair with which husbands and wives should occupy themselves individually. It is recommended to do things nicely, to make no noise, to take good care of the keyholes and listen attentively to the footsteps of those who walk in the apartments. The meshes of the law are wide, very wide; he must be more than an idiot who falls into them and cannot extricate himself. The flag of matrimony covers all contraband; to try to establish one's paternity is prohibited; the sons born of a legitimate couple are legitimate. Onward, onward! For heaven's sake do not bother with your whims and your embarrassing declarations of foreign merchandise. The customs officers close their eyes and do not see, shut their ears and do not hear; why are you such an idiotic crowd as to wish to awaken them with your imprudent cries? Onward, onward! The meshes of the law are wide. Bastardize families, falsify names and surnames, spread mendacity and sow deception in all the paths of social and civil life! Disseminate lies and scatter deceptions everywhere! See to it that there shall be no wall against which to lean, no road that can be trod without injuring the foot with a sharp stone or a piece of poisoned glass! Make the name of father a senseless word, that of mother a blasphemy!

CHAPTER XX

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF LOVE

"Love me! You must love me!" This is a cry of sorrow that often man utters, and oftener a forsaken woman; but it generally is a vain cry. To demand love as a right is one of the greatest follies; it is like asking poetry of the slave of thought, or expecting to find the perfumes of the rose and the cedar in the frigid zones that glaciate the head and the feet of our planet. Lovers, however, have always the right to hurl into space another cry of sorrow: "You must not betray me!" Better to snatch from one's hand the cup of love and shatter it into a thousand pieces than stealthily to pour into it the poison of betrayal or the wormwood of indifference. Love bursts forth spontaneously from the human heart, and draws all its beauty and strength from the infinite freedom of the horizon in which it moves. The laws that govern it are as simple as the simplest law of elementary physics: to attract, to unite, to render love for love, sweetness for sweetness, to give joy to those who give us so much joy, make happy those who make us happy: such is its law. If love were only a contact of hearts and thoughts; if, having ascended to heaven, you have descended from it without an angel; if in your embraces you have not rekindled the torch of life, greet each other as friends, bless the happy hours that your love has conceded you, and preserve in the most precious casket and among the dearest things the memory of the time that is no more. Never close a day of paradise with a blasphemy or a remorse; the tears of regret for what you have lost can be the dew of a summer night that tempers the ardor of the enamored corollas; but your tears should not be cursed by a lie, a betrayal, an insult.

The only right—that of not being deceived—has its counterpart in a very simple duty—that of making oneself beloved. You cannot command love, but through beauty of form, quickness of mind, voluptuous grace of movements or virtues of the heart you have awakened the affection of affections; if you know how to preserve it, you will be loved forever. On the very first page of every code of love, at the beginning of every gospel of two lovers, I would always write this sentence: "Not to be loved is always a great fault." And you will find this sentence written in a hundred different forms in the pages of my book.

Ask the most fortunate of women if she has not often felt impelled to reconquer a love that threatened to fly away. She jealously conceals the numberless stratagems with which she warmed the tepid, aroused the sleeping, caused the wearied to smile, made hungry and thirsty him who had the happy misfortune of overgorging himself at the banquet of voluptuousness. Man is, by nature, polygamous, more unfaithful, more brutal, more capricious, more licentious than woman, and it is her duty to make him monogamous, faithful, constantly tender and modestly virile. If it is true that man attacks and conquers, it is also very true that nature assigns to woman the more difficult task of keeping the conquest, of being the vestal of that fire which man has nearly always been the first to kindle. This is perhaps the most common formula that expresses the different missions which man and woman have in love. To us to kindle the fire, to our companion to keep it burning.

By all that you hold most sacred on earth, do not be so brutal as to record the embrace among the rights and duties of love. This is written in the code, and is daily repeated by those Bœotians for whom love is but the union of male and female. Voluptuousness should be inebriating foam that floats on the quivering wave of passion and overflows and falls irresistibly into those abysses where man loses the consciousness of existence and believes in the infinite; it cannot be a feast ordered for a stated hour, much less a tribute exacted with the rudeness of a tax collector. How many

delicate loves were extinguished by the sacrilegious hand of an arrogant desire, which would assume the air of command and tread the ground with the iron boot of an alleged right! No; the embrace is not a right and much less a duty: it is a unanimous consent of two powerful energies that seek each other through infinite space and, suavely struggling against each other, die together in an ocean of sweetness.

Sincerity and fidelity, which are after all an identical thing and constitute the entire code of love, should never be on the lips of two lovers, and the words *right* and *duty* should be debarred from the amorous vocabulary. Who ever loses his time in discussing the beauties of the sun? Who doubts that air is necessary to live? When certain things begin to be discussed, they are already in serious danger of being lost; and if a continuous, vexatious investigation should at every hour cast the shadow of doubt upon the faithfulness of one's companion, the latter would have the right of feeling wretchedly loved or at least cruelly loved. I do not fear sudden anger between two lovers, or the querulous and tender lamentations; but I have a deep horror of every question about right and duty. When these discourses appear on the horizon, I always see at the same time dark clouds massing; I see looming up the horns of Balzac's tawny moon.

Are the rights of love equal in man and woman? No! a thousand times no! I say so in a loud voice and after the first white hairs and a wide experience permit me to believe that I speak without anger or love. No; the sin of infidelity is not the same in Adam and in Eve: in the latter it is a hundred times greater. As a right and before the courts all parties are equal, but man and woman differ too greatly to be punished in the same measure. If the code is one, the jurors are a thousand; many are the accusers, many the lawyers; and the sentence of amorous betrayal has already been pronounced by all civilized nations and always in the same manner. This unanimous consent was not imposed by the arrogance of men, who alone were the legislators before the courts and judges in the forum of public opinion. No;

this unanimous consent was dictated by a deep consciousness of social necessities, by a more profound and subtler justice that descends into the inmost recess of things to find the roots of that awkward and superficial justice which asserts that all men are equal before the law. How false this dogma is can be sufficiently proved by the history of the jury system, one of the institutions on which our century seems to pride itself.

From man society exacts a hundred different and difficult virtues: he must give his blood for his country and the sweat of his brow for his family and for society; he must be strong, ambitious; he must not allow himself to be corrupted by gold or the seductions of vanity. A physician, he must throw himself into the inglorious and tremendous battle of epidemic; a soldier, he must hold his head high in the face of murderous fire; a lawyer, he must resist the temptations of gold and ambition; a statesman, he must fight against himself, against his family, for the welfare of his country. Defender of the weak, of the shipwrecked, of the poor, natural defender of the female half of the human species and of all the individuals who are of no value to society, he is a warrior perpetually under arms, and should he neglect one of his duties, he is branded as a coward; society despises him, woman does not want him, everyone ignores him.

Woman, on the contrary, can be a coward in the face of fire, of work, of contagion, and of all the battles of life; she can be ignorant and timorous and still be loved and esteemed by all; for in her weakness approaches grace, and it is so sweet to us to take the faint-hearted dove to our bosom and comfort her with our courage, defend her with our strength!

And even blunders are amusing when pronounced by the beautiful lips of a beloved woman! We forgive her if she very rarely reaches the height of genius and more rarely than we attains the average height of the great intellectual minds; we forgive her if she has no profession, if she does not earn her bread with work. Of her we ask only one thing: *fidelity*; from her we exact only one virtue: *fidelity!* Pray,

O most gentle and divine companions, on what side does the scale of the balance fall? Certainly not our side.

Woman may be humble, ignorant, tremble at every leaf that quivers, at every wing that vibrates in the air; but she should be faithful to him who loves her. She may yield to everything, but must resist the seductions of defiant glances and the corruptions of gold and vanity; she should be the heroine of sentiment, as we are the heroes of all the battles of life. She is the vestal of our heart and blood. While we are fighting in one field for her, for the name she bears, for the honor of our children, she should assiduously and faithfully watch the sacred fire of fidelity, that it may not die out through neglect or be overthrown and extinguished by the hurricane. This virtue only we ask of her; is it, perhaps, too much? What is her duty, then? What is the difficult struggle that shall give her also the mark of character and make her equal to us, worthy to be our companion? If she is beautiful, we are strong; if she is graceful, we are gifted. For her we have conquered our planet, subdued the lightning, destroyed the beasts of prey, invented arts, created sciences. But neither beauty nor grace nor wit is sufficient for a man to deem himself civilized; there are imposed on us a thousand dangers, on her but one: that of seduction. We are dragged into a hundred battles; she has only to gain victory over the senses. From us the world expects a hundred virtues; from her but one: *faith*. Are we, then, tyrants? Are we too exacting with her whom we love so much, for whom we do everything, to whom we dedicate all our thoughts, our glories, our dreams and our labors?

But there is another powerful reason for which the duties of love are differently distributed between man and woman. Man, by the special mission which his sex imposes on him, is a sudden aggressor and has organic necessities which are unknown to woman, and which he can satisfy with the rapidity of lightning. Without losing his love, he may have a caprice more fleeting than the lightning flash, and which, once vanished, leaves behind not even a pinch of ashes. I neither praise nor justify these sudden surprises of the

senses, these passing infidelities; but I describe them because I find them frequently in the aggressive and petulant nature of the virile sex. Woman, instead, must defend herself. Man loses a great part of energy in the tooth that bites and in the claws that firmly hold the prey. Woman draws in her horns, like the snail does in the spires of its labyrinth, and, languidly and voluptuously concealed in the foam of her shell of love, allows herself to be caressed. She loses nothing in the struggle for conquest, and she is wholly consumed in the delights of letting herself be loved. Woman also may have caprices of the senses, but they are light clouds which no sooner appear than they are dissolved in the deep azure of the skies, and do not become ardent desires until the human claws press and condense them. Woman is silent even when she desires. Very weak in the attack, she is formidable in the defense, and has in herself so much energy as to stop and disarm a legion of combatants. With much shrewdness she defends her weakness every day, telling us that seductions wage war upon her from all quarters, while we are the first to seek the opportunities of sin. This is one of the most insidious sophisms, but it is also one of the weakest arguments of defense. Man attacks and assails simply because he is a man and could not wait for the seductions to come to him without condemning himself to be a eunuch and without inverting the most elementary and most inexorable laws of nature. Nor would a woman commit less of a sacrilege in turning from the defensive to the offensive, profaning her sex and violating nature in that which it holds most sacred and immutable.

Not in vain has nature made the human female a virgin, and denied us the sorrowful virtue of virginity. The woman who yields to the first amorous pruriency is a Messalina; the man who darts the first arrow of love is a warrior who with wise prudence prepares the weapons for the long battle that awaits him. Man begins with "yes" and "I will"; woman begins and ends with "no" and "I will not." The sudden caprice of the senses is in her harassed by so many physical, social and religious impediments that she must really be

more than an Amazon to overthrow them in a single dash. Everything incites man to a swift assault which perhaps does not even bruise the epidermis of his heart; everything defends woman from these caprices. To yield she must have had a long struggle against nature and society; laws and religions offer her a thousand allies for defense, and not once in a hundred times she can say without touching the frontiers of prostitution: "I had a caprice." No one believes in the efficiency of overbearingness, much less woman herself, unless she should need this faith to justify her own sin. In love every fault, every crime, even patricide and incest, are possible—but not theft. Let woman never profane herself nor spoil the cause, often very just, which she defends, by speaking of seduction and violence. Let her rather speak of the irresistible impulse of vengeance, of the law of retaliation; let her discuss the natural right, because there she is on the ground of truth and justice; let her complain aloud because in the human organism she is the left side, the weakest, the least honored and the most oppressed. Let her demand the right to love and to be loved, but never ask equality of punishment for sins too disparate.

Nor does society measure human guilt only according to the reckoning of the natural right; but the more sorrow a crime generates and the more it offends human needs, the more severe the punishment inflicted by society. Have you ever thought of the various consequences of a caprice of infidelity, according as a man or a woman is guilty? For man the caprice of an hour is a stain that tarnishes the bright mirror of a sworn faith, of an immaculate and sublime love; but a few moments afterward a new kiss, more ardent and pregnant with the pungent aroma of remorse, revives love perhaps more intensely and makes impossible for long years, perhaps forever, another sudden infidelity. The amorous caprice may be a blasphemy that breaks forth from the lips of a saint, but which is immediately deterged by a wave of holy prayer; it is the weakness of a robust runner who stumbles against a stone, but proudly resumes his way and with energetic steps recovers the space lost a hundredfold.

The amorous caprice of a woman may in a single instant procreate a bastard, poison the wave of milk and honey of an entire family, sow a generation of fraternal hatreds, of infinite sorrows, overflow into a vast field, inundating everything with wormwood and gall. In man such a caprice is a stain, in woman a gangrene; in man a wound by a pin, in woman the caries of a bone; in man a leaf that falls, in woman a hurricane that fells a whole forest; in man a misdemeanor, in woman a felony; in man the remorse of an hour, in woman a monument of infamy that time will never efface.

CHAPTER XXI

THE COVENANTS OF LOVE

Love is not only a voluptuousness given and returned, the interweaving and untying of instantaneous knots, but a compact between two creatures who, after having given themselves to each other, may in a single instant have created a family, perhaps a nation. In man, love is fecundation as well, but is, above all, the interweaving of two existences, a combination of new relations, a deep modification of the manner of existence for a man and a woman.

Even in the lowest races, even where morality is only interest defended by strength and sacrifice is a folly, where phantoms of religious sentiment scarcely exist, where they bury the old mother alive, or celebrate victories and vintage with a sea of blood; even there love is bound by a compact, silent or sworn. Prostitution also is a compact that may last an hour or a minute, but is always a compact. In any case, the sale and purchase of voluptuousness cannot found a family, a tribe, a people; and even the loosest libertine and the wildest savage feel other needs than that of fecundating a female: they feel the necessity of loving a woman. And to love does not mean to unite the members of two bodies in a single knot, but to possess each other a long time, and to desire, to defend, to protect each other; it means to hold oneself responsible to nature for the weakness of one creature and the violence of another, for the future of the being whom we have procreated together and brought into the world.

Woman, when fecundated, is for nine months weaker and more vulnerable; the woman who is in travail is a wounded creature; the woman who nurses can neither flee nor defend

herself, and the man-child is for a long time defenseless and very weak. The man, then, who has loved a companion even for one day becomes for a long time her friend and protector without ceasing to be her lover. This is the simplest form of the nuptial compact, which is found in many of the lower nations. While the savage female leans affectionately and confidingly on the male who has made her fruitful, he often finds himself to be a man when his companion cannot be a woman, and he then fecundates other females, who are added to his possessions and whom he protects with the same devotion and affection with which he protects and defends the first woman who was his. The very weak man can have but one female, or he must often do without her, because the strong men have more than one and the very strong have many, who often dwell merrily under one roof without being in the least jealous of one another. A polygamy limited to a few females is the most common form of human society in the lower races, and our organism is so imbued with this custom that even in the highest forms of civilization, where morality and religion do not lend their valid support, monogamy slips and falls, to give place to a polygamy more or less acknowledged or concealed.

We, however, must occupy ourselves only with our own society, where the compact of love has but one moral form: *matrimony;* while it has various forms that belong to the world of pathology, namely, *prostitution, rape, concubinage.*

We have already studied prostitution. It is the sale of voluptuousness, the possession of bodies without love, the swindling and deceiving of nature; and if nature, only too often cruel, causes a new creature to be generated through a purchased embrace, that creature will enter the world with the mark of infamy on its brow, and, anonymous child of vice, will be cast by society into the most obscure corner of the social vaults, where the things lie which we wish to efface, forget and allow to die. Prostitution is a safety-valve only too necessary in our immoral and hypocritical society, wretchedly constituted, and it exists to prove with most

cruel eloquence that many men cannot love, that very many men should not love.

We have also dealt with rape in the house of others. Even this greatest of the crimes of love we have been compelled to discuss: secret agreement of two traitors who, in the shadow of a social and holy compact, violate the faith of the family and bastardize the world; vile contract of the thief with the procurer, who assassinate in the dark and conceal the victim in the wide folds or the deep fissures of our written codes.

Concubinage in many imperfect societies, and even among us, is a form of matrimony which lacks only religious and civil consecration. It is more despicable for its origin than for the nature of the compact that binds it, because if it lasted eternally, supported only by the word of honor of two creatures who love each other, it would be a true and proper marriage, sealed by the faith of two lovers. Only too often, however, concubinage has an obscure and even shameful origin: it is domestic lechery which has become a habit; it is a vulgar custom that has a periodical type: mustiness of the kitchen or stench of the hospital. Born between the Turkish babooshes and the nightcaps, between the after-dinner yawns and the advices of the hygienist, it has a tinge of prostitution and rape, but knows neither the inebriation of the one nor the pungent remorse of the other. It is a vulgar pickpocket, who begs pardon of the public and is ashamed of himself and weeps when caught in the act; it is something low, plebeian and shameful, that does not admit of public confession, and hides like a wound in the leg or a false tooth; it debases love to pygmy proportions, lowers the level of the spouse and elevates that of the chambermaid. It is an upstart who can dress well, but smells of the stable; a despicable, often even ridiculous creature, who is merely tolerated.

When one refrains from assuming all moral responsibility; when, through sluggishness, ignorance or skepticism, or for all these reasons, one abdicates the supreme primacy of husband and father, a right which not even the nude

cannibal will relinquish, one becomes in modern society a sort of convict freed on parole, to whom liberty is granted on condition that he will regularly report to the police; a sort of brigand allowed at large, who, for lack of proof, cannot be sentenced to prison. A hundred times better, prostitution with its degradations and vile infirmities! Public opinion, laws, books should scourge and place in the pillory of ridicule and opprobrium this bastard compact of concubinage, denying it all assent, consent and toleration. And women too, who, more than the laws, can be the avengers of these social degradations, should flagellate these amphibia of love, denying them caresses and esteem, and showing to them at every hour, with cruel art, how different are the voluptuous aromas of true love from the daily slop of domestic concubinage.

The man of a high race, who aspires to be called a civilized man, should be monogamous, and cannot consecrate his love with any other compact than matrimony.

Matrimony should be a free, a very free selection, for the woman as much as for the man; it should be the selection of selections, the typical selection.

As long as we deny the young woman a free and wise education so that she may choose well; as long as we deny her the same right of selection as man possesses, we never will be able to elevate matrimony. The common consciousness in two creatures that they have chosen each other freely and that they love each other without any bond of interest, any pressure of authority, of prejudice, of ambition, is the sacred corner-stone on which the most splendid temples of conjugal happiness are erected, and it has sufficient power to preserve that happiness amidst the greatest domestic storms.

Neither do I believe in sudden and irresistible loves, nor in the future happiness of a married couple who, without straw to weave the nest, in the open country, amid the frosts of misery, wish to erect a temple to Love. No; matrimony is love and should be nothing except love. But love is nude and wants to be clothed; love is delicate, and wants to be nourished and protected from the winds and the frosts; love

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is fruitful, and should have bread and wine to keep alive the little angels that will bloom in its garden. All this should be known by our young girls; our authority should go no further than temporizing; we should never impose anything on lovers except patience; and this in itself is sufficient to cause many transient desires to vanish, while it invigorates true loves. But in any case, and always, selection should be free, and to prepare for it the education of our daughters should be more sincere, more frank, less hypocritical, less false. Teach your child modesty and personal dignity, and you will see that with such sentiments the fortress you wish to guard will very rarely capitulate. Perpetual diffidence rouses many false alarms, stirs up in many frivolous and touchy natures the desire for spite and revenge. Diffidence always in arms gives one a pessimistic idea of the virtues of mothers; perhaps they remember how weakly they resisted temptation and they try by every art to avoid it, instead of strengthening the forces that should defend virtue.

The free selection of woman is much more important in our society, because she is not ignorant of the fact that in marriage she will find an immense liberty; perhaps she also divines that, even though she should not love the official spouse, she can still love and be loved. When a society is entirely saturated with adultery and hypocrisy, even the chaste and ingenuous maiden is dimly prescient of certain things which she dares not acknowledge to herself. Without leaving the domestic nest, she may perhaps know with what infamy a family may become sullied; she has, perhaps, more than once repeated to herself: "I will not sin, but—I, too, could sin with impunity."

Free selection is the best guarantee of faith; it is the only touchstone by which the true natural rights of mutual fidelity are tried. No one has the right to cast the first stone at the adulteress if she, ignorant, was dragged to the altar; no wife can be condemned if she was forced to sign the compact like a victim and a slave instead of as a woman and a lover.

All these reforms which must elevate matrimony will be

but slowly secured through the progress of education and customs, through morality strengthened by science and not by fear, through greater respect for the liberty of woman, who must be raised from the low level where modern society has still left her.

THE END

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